



HALIFAX

URBAN DESIGN AWARDS | 2021

Jury Report



“It’s hard to design a space that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished.”

- William H. Whyte

HALIFAX URBAN DESIGN AWARDS 2021

Urban Design is about creating places for people that are beautiful, inclusive, healthy, and safe. Urban design plays a crucial role in working with communities to co-create and adapt to changing needs and changing conditions. The Halifax Regional Municipality is pleased to partner with the Nova Scotia Association of Architects (NSAA), the Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia (LPPANS), the Atlantic Provinces Association of Landscape Architects (APALA), Engineers Nova Scotia (ENS), and the Interior Designers of Nova Scotia (IDNS), to recognize excellence in urban design.

After a successful relaunch of the bi-annual Urban Design Awards in 2018, we are excited to continue the promotion and celebration of great local urban design and we were pleased with the increase in submissions. We have recently seen unprecedented growth in our region as more people choose to call Halifax home. The global pandemic exposed the vulnerabilities but also the strength and resiliency of our region, with access to generous public places being more important than ever to our collective well-being. While the award process had to pivot to a virtual format this year, it is important that we celebrate the restoration and adaptive re-use of our heritage buildings, new buildings, improvements to public places, and the work of our students.

The 2021 Halifax Urban Design Awards program aims to recognize and celebrate the individuals, organizations, and design and development firms that have contributed to urban design in the municipality in both public and private spaces. To help best achieve this intent, we have leaned on the expertise of the local design community, local professional organizations and their national affiliates, and the Royal Architecture Institute of Canada National Urban Design Awards program for guidance. We would like to express a special appreciation to our independent jurors who have generously contributed their time and expertise to this process.

Sincerely,

HRM Planning & Development

HALIFAX


LPPANS
Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia

NOVA SCOTIA  ASSOCIATION OF ARCHITECTS


Engineers
NOVA SCOTIA

 Atlantic Provinces Association of
Landscape Architects

idnc
Interior Designers of Nova Scotia

SUBMISSIONS 2021

Submissions were received for eight award categories. Three new categories were introduced for this year's awards: Heritage Restoration, Heritage Adaptive Re-use and Student Projects.

Each category had different eligibility requirements and individual criteria for award selection. In addition to being evaluated based on each category's individual criteria, all successful nominees must have achieved the Municipality's Urban Design Goals as stated below:

- Design that is human scaled;
- Design that reflects community context; and
- Design that inspires civic awareness and participation.

Awards of Excellence will be received by submissions that meet all of the parameters/ criteria set out for the program and Urban Design Excellence.

Awards of Merit will be received by submissions that may not meet all of the parameters/ criteria set out for the program, but whose contribution to urban design in HRM warrants recognition.

CATEGORIES

Urban Architecture

This category is for a building (or group of buildings) that contributes to and supports an urban design plan or initiative. The submission shall be of high architectural standard while achieving urban design excellence through its unique relationship with immediate surroundings (considering site, massing, pedestrian amenities, etc.). The building also contributes to defining a special relationship with the neighbouring urban fabric.

Civic Design Projects

This category is for civic improvement projects such as parks, public space, civil engineering or environmental infrastructure, streetscape design, etc. which have been implemented as a result of a larger urban design plan or initiative.

Urban Fragments

Urban elements are single, small-scale pieces of a building or landscape that contribute significantly to the quality of the public realm. This category includes small and modest elements such as street furniture, lighting, interpretation media, memorials, public art, atriums, foyers, or other forms of intervention that contribute to the beautification, sustainability, enjoyment, and/or appreciation of the urban environment.

Community Connections & Initiatives

This category is for any built project, however modest, initiated and implemented by a community-based organization that enhances the public realm. Examples include, but are not limited to: street improvement plans, public art, commemorative or interpretive installations, and environmental initiatives.

Urban Design Plans

This category is for a plan or a study of a significant area within the municipality that provides a development or redevelopment strategy for urban transformation in the mid- to long-term. Urban design studies, master plans, redevelopment strategies, and community plans of high inspirational value with the potential for significant impact on sustainability or development may be submitted.

Heritage Restoration

Where an important heritage resource or group of resources have been carefully and expertly returned to their original beauty and quality (interior and exterior) while contributing to the successful urban design of the community. A heritage resource can include but is not limited to buildings or urban elements.

Heritage Adaptive Re-use

Where a heritage resource has been thoughtfully and expertly adapted for a new use while maintaining the integrity and important character elements of the resource. Heritage resources include but are not limited to buildings or urban elements.

Student Projects

Urban design project with a focus on the Halifax Regional Municipality and completed by a student or group of students enrolled at a local post-secondary institution in the past two years.

JURY PANEL

Anne McIlroy

FRAIC, RPP, FCIP

Principal at Brook McIlroy - Toronto

Anne has over twenty five years' experience as an urban designer for master plan projects across Canada and the United States. Anne has particular expertise in the development of design standards for communities, waterfronts, universities and other institutions. She is a recognized expert in the facilitation of design workshops and public consultation forums. Anne has been appointed to the Toronto Community Housing Design Review Panel and to the National Capital Commission's Design Review Panel.

Antonio Gomez-Palacio

RPP, MCIP, MRAIC

Principal at Dialog - Toronto

Antonio's professional experience and research focuses on the intersection of architecture, planning and urban design. He is internationally recognized for transforming cities into vibrant urban places, which respond to their social, economic and environmental context. Antonio has worked on a wide range of projects focused on urban intensification, master planning, mixed-use, transit, heritage, economic development and sustainability, as facilitated through participatory processes. Antonio has acted as the Chair of the Toronto Society of Architects and Vaughan's Design Review Panel.

Joseli Macedo

Ph.D.

Professor, School of Planning, Dalhousie University

Joseli Macedo is a Professor in the School of Planning and former Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at Dalhousie University. Prior to joining Dalhousie, she was Head of School of Design and the Built Environment at Curtin University in Perth, Australia. At the University of Florida, in the U.S., Joseli served as Chair of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Director of the Center for International Design and Planning, and Affiliate Faculty in the Center for Latin American Studies and the School of Natural Resources and the Environment. A Fulbright-Nehru scholar, she has taught and conducted research in the Americas, India and Australia in the areas of sustainable cities, urban design, and international development planning for over 25 years.

She is the author of several articles and book chapters on land policy and land tenure, housing policy, city design and urban form, urban planning history, and pedagogy. Joseli has also served as a consultant to the World Bank in the U.S. and to the GAIA Consortium in Brazil.

JURY STATEMENT 2021

The Jury would like to congratulate the Halifax Regional Municipality and its citizens for another year of great entries to the Urban Design Awards. Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is experiencing unprecedented growth and the calibre of entries to the awards program is similarly growing. The awards seek emphasize the importance of urban design excellence.

We were pleased to see an increase in the number of entries and an addition of three new categories. We have awarded eight Awards of Excellence and four Awards of Merit. We were impressed by the quality of projects submitted. This year saw the addition of a Student category. We recognize the strong talent of local students and hope to see even more entries at our next awards.

A common theme in this year's submissions were attempts to address urban infill in innovative and complimentary ways. In the Urban Architecture category, we were pleased to see so many entries. In the end, we were attracted and compelled by four submissions that demonstrate successful urban infill, at very different scales. We hope that the local design and development community can take these as interesting precedents as the municipality continues to explore how to intensify the whole region. Each project has little lessons that if noticed by the local industry could be picked up and used in other projects to promote good urban design.

Anne McIlroy, Antonio Gomez-Palacio, & Joseli Macedo





AWARD OF MERIT FOR CIVIC DESIGN

KESHEN GOODMAN OUTDOOR LIBRARY

Project Team
Lead Firm:
Outside! Landscape Architects Inc.

Developer / Owner / Client
Halifax Public Libraries

Contractor
General Contractor:
TurfMasters Landscaping Ltd.

Completed In
November 2019

This project serves as a real complement to the library experience. The importance of creating place outside the library is highlighted. Visiting a library includes an exterior experience and this simple intervention serves that function well. This space is wonderful for families and patrons that may want a break from the quiet interior of a library to experience the outdoors.

The simplicity and community-oriented nature of this project is a highlight of this submission. It represents a positive shift in how we experience libraries today; from coffee shops, innovative learning spaces and expansions further into the public realm. This project successfully emphasizes the role of libraries today as it pushes into the outdoors. No longer is a library solely a lender of books.

Another highlight of this project is a testament to not needing a big budget in order to make spaces enjoyable and accessible to the community.



Photo credit: T.J. Maguire

EXCELLENCE IN CIVIC DESIGN

HALIFAX WATERFRONT SEA BRIDGE

Beyond its utility as a bridge, the simplicity and economy of means bring joy. This important and dynamic infrastructure presents an opportunity for members of the public to get out and experience the water.

This project is a demonstration of how a seemingly small intervention can have a big impact to a much larger context, in this case the whole waterfront. This small gesture has an important role in sustaining the waterfront pathway.

As a jury, we see the Sea Bridge as an attraction in and of itself. It is something that people would come to the waterfront to experience. It's a low-key version of the High Line in New York. You might come with your family to experience being out on the water, which normally you couldn't do on a simple bridge intervention.

Project Team

Lead Firm:
Develop Nova Scotia

Associate Firm:
Eagle Beach Contracting, Roderick G. Construction

Developer / Owner / Client

Develop Nova Scotia

Contractor

General Contractors:
Waterworks Construction (now part of Dexter Construction)

Completed In

July 2017



AWARD OF MERIT FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & INITIATIVES

DAFFODIL GARDEN FOR CANCER SURVIVORS

Project Team
Lead Firm:
Outside! Landscape Architects Inc.

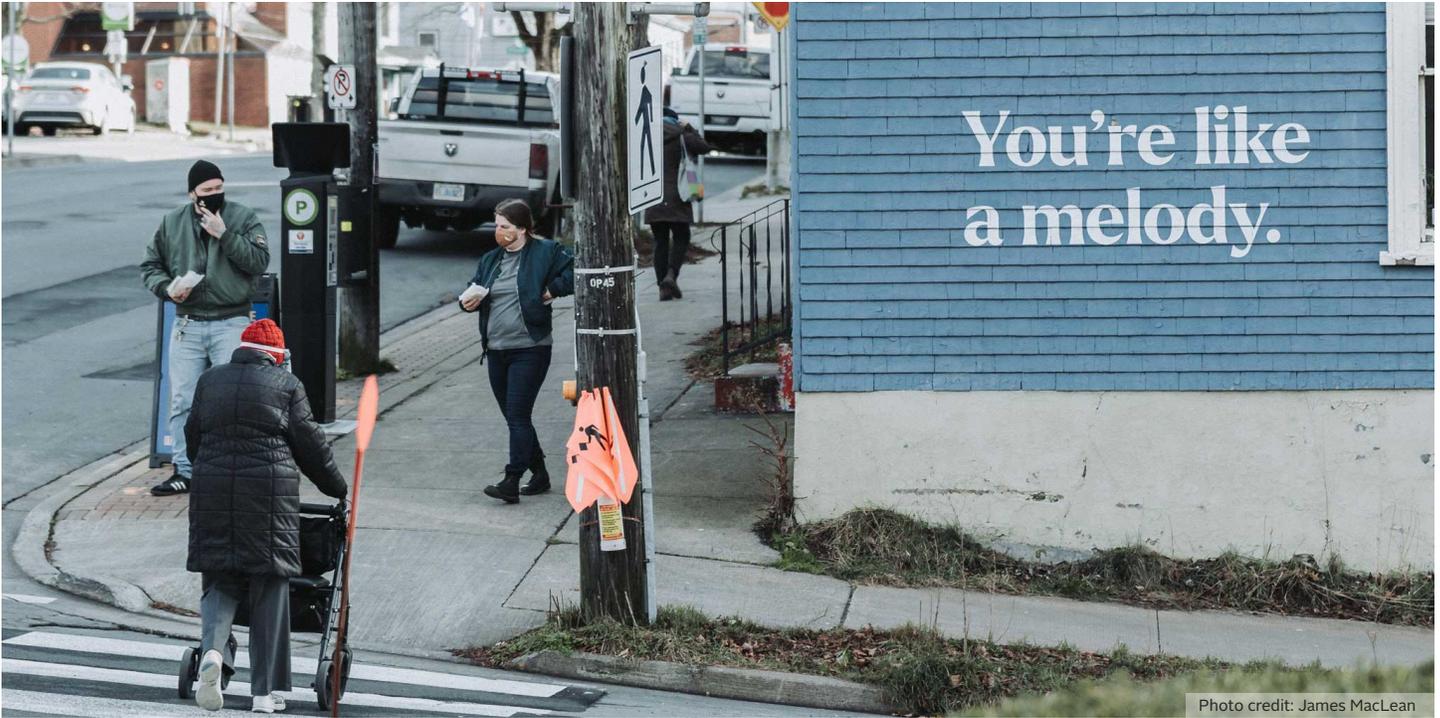
Developer / Owner / Client
Halifax Regional Municipality

Contractor
Excel Landscaping

Completed In
September 2020

This is a very well-rounded project and thought process that starts with the engagement of families. The place-making, the design of the furniture, the ground-breaking event, the messaging; it's a very well-rounded initiative. The project is tied together well with a clear plan.

The graphic nature of the project is notable with the choice to use yellow as a featured colour. The project develops and builds on a visual language that is recognizable and can build wider awareness and potential. The choice of daffodil is also notable as a symbol of the cause but also as a perennial flower that will signal the idea of healing and returning each spring.



EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & INITIATIVES

WORD MURALS

In a word, impact. These small gestures are highly effective and provide an uplifting break. The impact of these installations are also worth noting given their clean and simple implementation, as well as their low budget and that they don't require physical space.

The language of the murals is actively humane. Instead of murals having a reputation as sales or marketing devices, this project is aspirational, it's about people. In addition to the choice of words and actual messages there's demonstrable skill in identifying the locations and the specific sites for intervention and how those contribute to the space around them. Considering viewscapes, view terminus, and their surroundings, there's a sensitivity to the recognition of the surrounding environment.

We feel that these murals also speak collectively to the city. The words add up to a sum of parts and language about the whole city as you move through it. It's a poetry of place.

Project Team
Lead Firm:
Fathom Studio

Developer / Owner / Client
Downtown Dartmouth Business
Commission

Completed In
December 2020

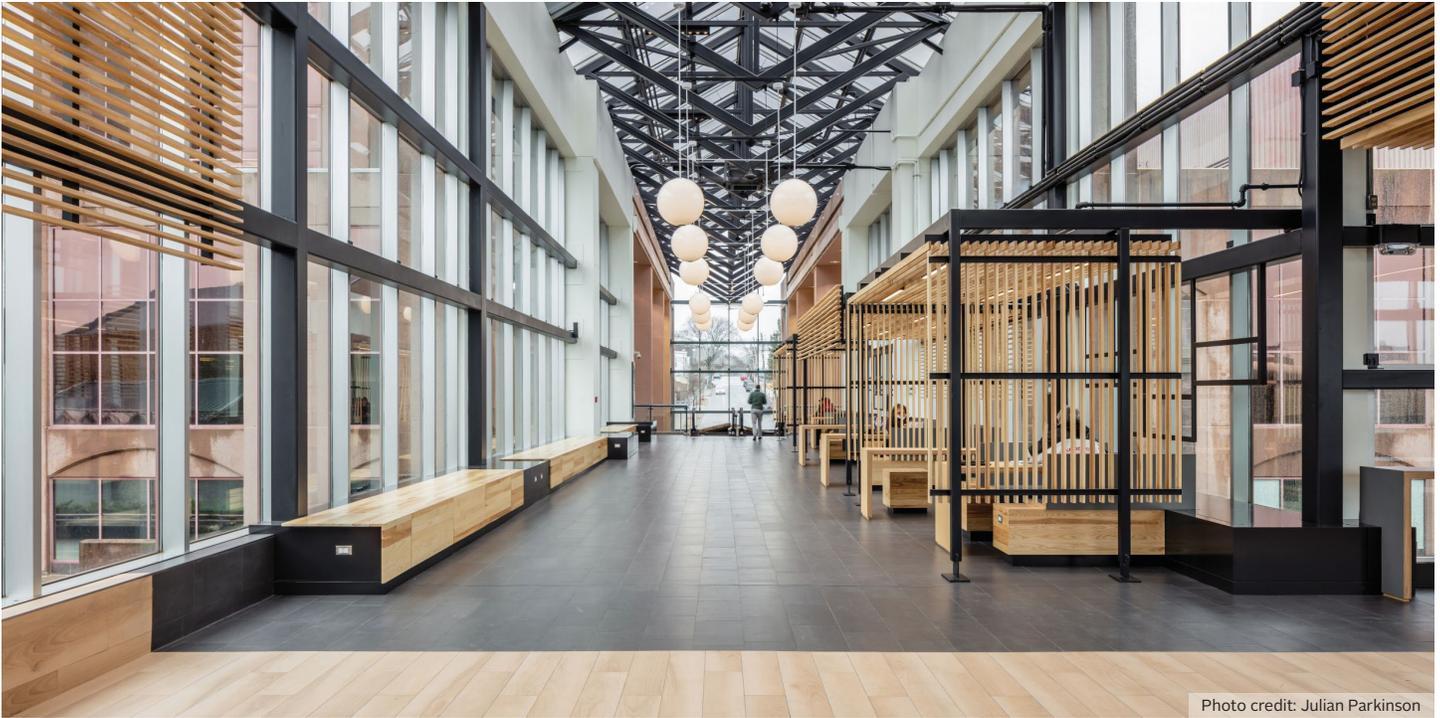


Photo credit: Julian Parkinson

EXCELLENCE IN URBAN FRAGMENTS

ALDERNEY GATE PEDWAY

Project Team

Lead Firm:
Abbott Brown Architects

Developer / Owner / Client

Halifax Regional Municipality

Contractor

General Contractors:
Avondale Construction Ltd.

Completed In

October 2018

Although this is an interior space, it's a significant element in the public realm that connects important destinations within downtown Dartmouth to the rest of the city. This intervention celebrates the experience of wanting to make an ordinary journey an extraordinary experience. The project offers opportunities for the public to pause and linger in the space.

The choice of wood as a prominent material in a lattice format is a pleasant surprise in a pedway. In this type of space you expect heavy bridge-like pieces, but the wood brings elements of warmth and comfort. Between the wood and blue transparent elements there's a lot of play with the natural light, offering a unique experience at different times of day.



EXCELLENCE IN HERITAGE RESTORATION

THE JAMES POWER COTTAGE RESTORATION

Restoration is about replication and this project achieves that with a serious attention to craftsmanship with detail and original design. The work completed is impressive in its execution on every level. There is a real focus not just on the design elements but also on the manufacturing process and skills needed for restoration.

In addition to commending the skills of restoration, we further acknowledge that this building, because of its location, has a strong public presence and because of its new use presents an opportunity for the public to enjoy its interior as well as exterior.

Project Team

Lead Firm:
DSRA Architecture

Developer / Owner / Client

Halifax Regional Municipality

Contractor

General Contractor:
Exterior - Masontech Inc.
Interior - Blunden Construction Inc.

Completed In

Exterior - 2015
Interior - 2018



EXCELLENCE IN HERITAGE ADAPTIVE RE-USE

HALIFAX CITY HALL, NEW CLERK'S OFFICES

Project Team

Lead Firm:
Abbott Brown Architects

Developer / Owner / Client

Halifax Regional Municipality

Contractor

General Contractors:
Avondale Construction Ltd.

Completed In

September 2019

This is a clear demonstration of how you can do heritage conservation and contemporary design in a way that are sympathetic and harmonious. The contemporary is distinct from the heritage but still respects the character of the space. In the space you experience details from the past right next to modern elements and they're woven together successfully.

While this space is an interior space, as a jury we feel that there is merit from an urban design perspective to acknowledge civic interior spaces that are accessible to the public realm. This space is a part of a public institution, so the interior space is a part of the public domain.



Photo credit: Zhiyi Chen

EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT PROJECTS

URBAN MICROREGENERATION

We commend the thought process in this project, as well as the rigorous research involved. There is a build-up of a strong narrative and spirit of the initiative throughout the project. We commend the good intent behind this project.

The layout and presentation of the project and document are clean and crisp. We appreciate the effort to include hand sketches which bring the pages alive. The project shows an intent of exploration.

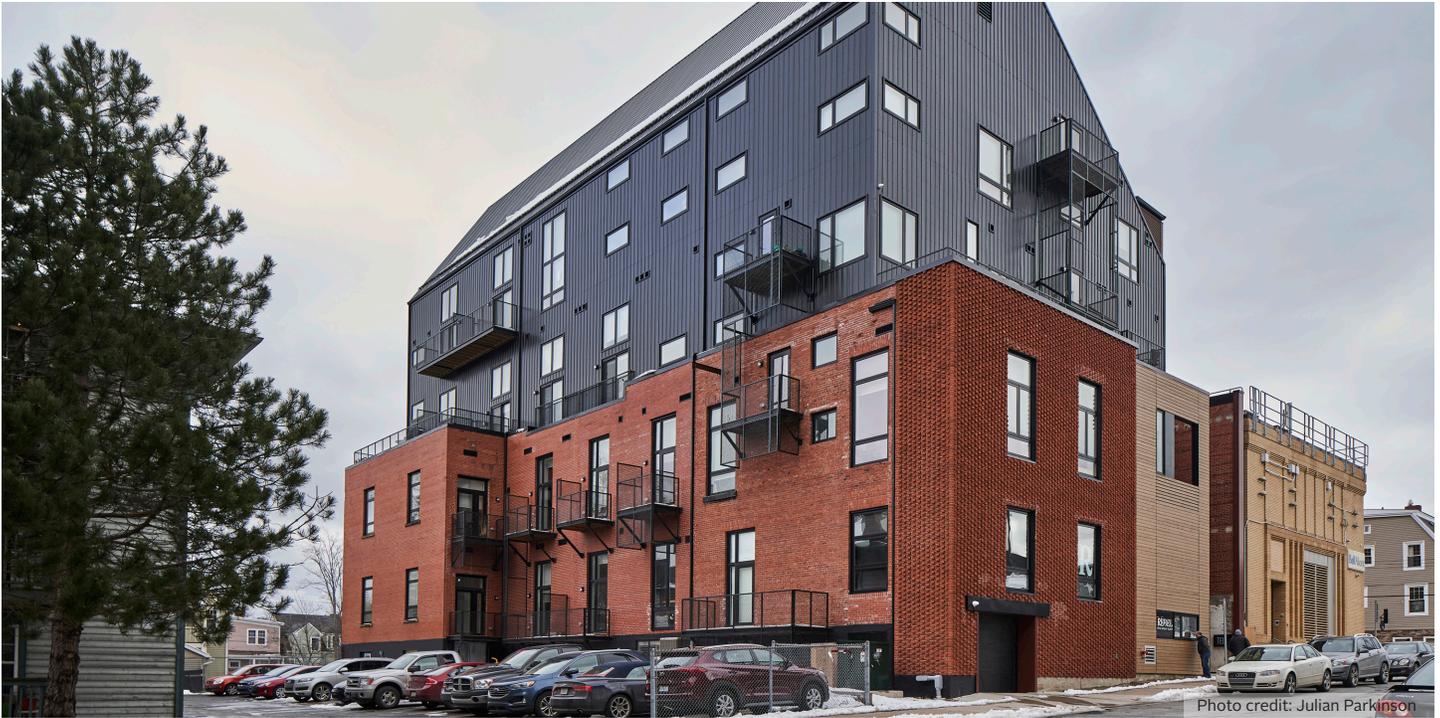
The jury is excited by the innovation in student projects and believes that Halifax has an incredible student body. We hope to see more and more entries at our next awards.

Project Team

Zhiyi Chen
Master of Design Student,
Nova Scotia College of Art & Design
University

Completed In

April 2020



AWARD OF MERIT FOR URBAN ARCHITECTURE

TEL LOFTS

Project Team
Lead Firm:
Abbott Brown Architects

Developer / Owner / Client
Bruno Builders Inc.

Completed In
2019

We appreciate the combination of preservation with the new parts of this development. The new, centre form has a commanding presence on the city skyline but also serves the building well to help tie fragmented facades together in a strong, interesting and eclectic way. Tel Lofts is not shy in its varied and layered use of materials. Its elements are distinct; old is old and new is new. The choice of different coloured bricks and wood represents a noble choice of local materials with a contemporary deployment.

This development could successfully serve as precedence for the area as it continues to evolve and layer forms and expressions. The bold layering evident in this building, echoes how cities and neighbourhoods are built. We could see this building acting as a creative inspiration for other buildings in the city.



AWARD OF MERIT FOR URBAN ARCHITECTURE GORSEBROOK PARK

Gorsebrook Park is a refreshingly simple, elegant and straightforward building that creates a positive frontage on all sides. This is a good city building that occupies a prominent site. The articulation of the mass in this building leads to shapes that are conducive to its environment.

In urban design today, the mid-rise form is fairly resolute but the massing of Gorsebrook Park, with two clearly articulated volumes bridged by a central connecting recess is fairly unique. We appreciate this central connection at grade from the street to the park.

Project Team

Lead Firm:
architectsAlliance

Associate Firm:
Michael Napier Architecture

Developer / Owner / Client

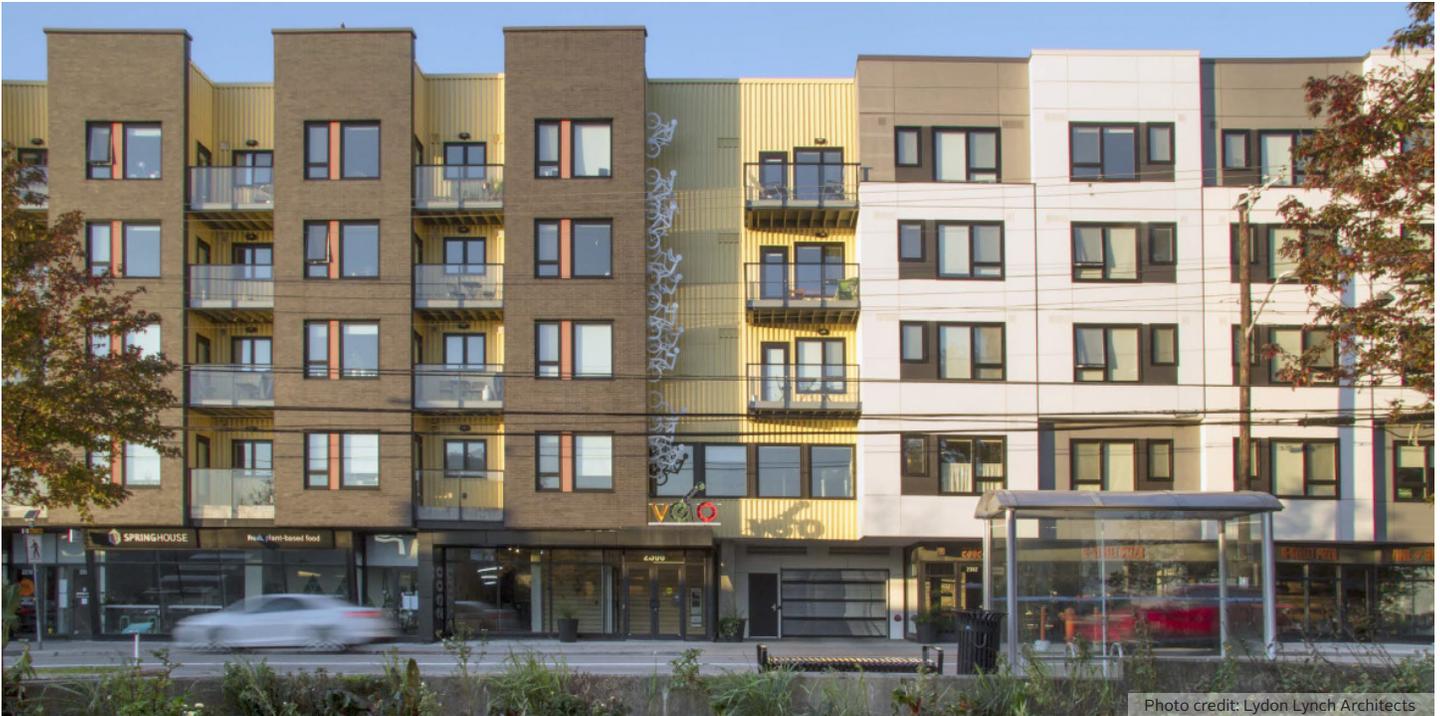
Urban Capital

Contractor

General Contractor:
MARCO

Completed In

2020



EXCELLENCE IN URBAN ARCHITECTURE

VELO

Project Team

Lead Firm:
Lydon Lynch Architects

Developer / Owner / Client

2300 Gottingen Street Ltd.

Contractor

General Contractors:
RoMa Developments Inc.

Completed In

February 2018

Velo is a surprisingly intense use of a site with an otherwise seemingly mid-scaled street exposure. It creates a relatively subtle intervention that actually adds a fair bit of density. The building addresses the main street (Gottingen) with a mixed-use frontage and addresses the rear with private and shared gardens.

The sectional treatment of the mixed-use form is very carefully considered and functions well. The vertical bays / indentations / articulation (pictured above) create a sense of a varied and fine-grained intervention that could otherwise feel monotonous. We also imagine that the development gives residents a good sense of where home is, you could easily point from the street to where home is. There is also a bit of cheekiness to this project, it deliberately nods to active transportation with fixtures and art which contributes to wider city building active transportation initiatives.



Photo credit: Janet Kimber

EXCELLENCE IN URBAN ARCHITECTURE

STANLEY STREET HOMES

This project represents a new and desirable housing typology. These compact single-family dwellings are very carefully sited to provide both a sense of privacy and community. Garden and lot placement lead to a sense of privacy, while a lack of fencing and creative building placement contribute to a sense of shared space and community.

The economy of means, simplicity, and economical gestures are successful and lead to a big effect. We also recognize the serious attempt within this development to create sustainable, energy-efficient architecture.

Project Team

Lead Firm:
Eric Stotts Architect

Associate Firm:
Andrew Lynch

Developer / Owner / Client

Kerry Lynch

Contractor

General Contractor:
Whitewood Carpentry

Completed In

2018



HALIFAX URBAN DESIGN AWARDS THE TROPHY DESIGN

The Halifax Urban Design Awards honour excellence in the field and celebrate many important contributions to the region. In the spirit of design excellence, the Municipality challenged NSCAD design students to create a trophy that will be presented to winners in each of the categories.

We are pleased to announce that Sasan Moradian, a fourth-year interdisciplinary student, has created the winning design.

Sasan is a multidisciplinary designer who started his work with a group of artists and young architects as a freelancer in Tehran. Sasan worked as a full-time graphic designer in different design agencies. For nearly a decade, Sasan worked on a range of design projects, including logo and identity design, signage design, environmental branding, website design, and packaging.

This winning design encapsulates the spirit of the Urban Design Awards – a street grid that reminds us to consider the relationship between buildings, streets and public and open spaces. The relationship between a person and the street, at ground level, is what urban design is all about.