

BACKGROUND

Regional Council has directed staff to examine the potential for including 1641 Fairfield Road, Halifax (Map 1) in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The subject property is situated at the east end of Fairfield Road, between Jubilee and Coburg Roads. The subject property has been used for recreational purposes since circa 1919 and contains a two-storey recreational building constructed around that time.

Based on a consideration of the varying significance of both the building and the property itself, staff are recommending that the property be evaluated as a heritage site. While the building evaluation criteria speaks more to the value of the architectural elements of the recreational building itself, evaluation as a site emphasizes the heritage value of the entire property.

This application is being considered in accordance with Sections 14 (Recommendation as municipal heritage property) and 15 (Registration as municipal heritage property) of the *Heritage Property Act*.

HRM's Heritage Property Program

The purpose of the HRM Heritage Property Program is to help protect and conserve significant heritage resources including buildings, streetscapes, sites, areas, and conservation districts that reflect the rich heritage found in local communities throughout HRM. One of the aims of the Heritage Property Program is to recognize significant heritage resources through the inclusion of properties into the Municipal Registry of Heritage Properties.

Heritage Site Evaluation Criteria

Under the Heritage Property Program, all registration applications for heritage properties are evaluated by the HAC using "The Evaluation Criteria for the Registration of Heritage Sites in Halifax Regional Municipality (Attachment A), or "The Evaluation Criteria for Registration of Heritage Buildings in Halifax Regional Municipality" (Attachment B). The heritage site evaluation criteria focus on the broader use and cultural associations of a property over time and places less attention on structures that may exist. Conversely, the heritage building analysis focuses primarily on structures, while the broader site history and landscape features are given secondary consideration.

A site with a long and varied history may score better on a site evaluation and have a broader list of character defining elements associated with historic land use and landscape elements. A property whose heritage value is mainly confined to an existing structure may score better through the building evaluation criteria and have most of its listed character defining elements relate to the structure itself. A property receives the same level of legal protection under the *Heritage Property Act* under either evaluation method.

The Evaluation Criteria for scoring a "heritage site" are broken down into four categories as follows:

Criterion	Highest Possible Score
1. Age / Continuity of Use	25
2. Historical Importance	25
3. Integrity	10
4. Context	10
Total	70

Should the HAC score a site with 35 or more points, a positive recommendation will be forwarded to Regional Council. If the site scores less than 35 points, the report will not be forwarded to Regional Council for their consideration.

Nova Scotia Heritage Property Act

HRM's Heritage Property Program receives its authority from the *Heritage Property Act* which seeks:

“to provide for the identification, designation, preservation, conservation, protection and rehabilitation of buildings, public-building interiors, structures, streetscapes, cultural landscapes, areas and districts of historic, architectural or cultural value, in both urban and rural areas, and to encourage their continued use”.

Sections 14(2) and 15(1) under the *Heritage Property Act* require that notice of recommendation is given to the property owner at least thirty (30) days prior to any Council decision to include the property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The property owner is also given an opportunity to address Council before they decide on the registration request. The property owner in this case is HRM. Should a positive recommendation be forwarded to Council, heritage staff will ensure the required notices are provided to the appropriate departmental staff within HRM and deposited at the Registry of Deeds.

DISCUSSION

Heritage registration applications for a heritage site are evaluated by the HAC relative to four evaluation criteria as outlined previously, and described in greater detail in Attachment A. In this case, HAC is being presented with a property that has significant history as a recreational site and representation of the history of rowing in Halifax, in addition to containing a significant publicly accessible boat club.

To assist the HAC in their evaluation and scoring, staff offer the following comments based on staff's research report (Attachment C). Properties evaluated under the site criteria, if registered, will be registered as a “heritage area” under the *Heritage Property Act*. It should be emphasized that there is no difference in the legal protections provided by the *Heritage Property Act* for properties registered as a heritage property or heritage area. The difference is solely in the focus of the evaluation on certain aspects of the property and its history.

Heritage Site Evaluation

A Heritage Site is defined as an area, cultural landscape, or feature, together with any structures thereon, which is significant to the social, cultural, commercial, military, or political history and development of Halifax Regional Municipality, the Province or Country. The Heritage Value of a site is derived from several sources, including age of a site or duration of use, as well as community and historical associations.

1. Age of Site / Continuity of Use

The St. Mary's Amateur Athletic and Aquatics Club (AAAC) was founded in 1874 by the St. Mary's Young Men's Temperance Abstinence and Benevolence Society for the enjoyment of Catholic youth in Halifax. A rowing and aquatics club at the Halifax Harbour was formed in 1876. In 1900, the society decided to move to the Northwest Arm waters and were briefly located on the Oakland property (south of Robie Street and east of Oakland Road). The club was then leasing land from Geoffrey Morrow who allowed the club to build a small yellow boathouse for shells on his property at the foot of Coburg Road. Morrow's property was located to the east of the current boat club location, near present day Birchdale Avenue (Birchdale being the name of Morrow's estate).



Figure 1: 1641 Fairfield Road (Staff photo, March 30, 2023)

In 1918, the St. Mary's Young Men's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society made an application with the Minister of Public Works under the Navigable Waters Protection Act, 1906, to construct a boathouse on the Northwest Arm, on Henry Pryor's 'Hillside' property on the south side of Jubilee Road. In 1919, the boat club was established as St. Mary's Boat Club. The Saint Mary's Young Men's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society obtained ownership of the neighbouring 'Fairfield' estate once owned by John Stairs in 1920. The Fairfield home was turned into a social club run by the society, who called it St. Mary's Villa. That same year, Eastern Trust Company sold a portion of another neighbouring property to the society, and a portion of land owned by the Crown for the railway was leased to the society for an annual sum of \$100.00. The accompanying plan surveyed in 1920 shows that the society had a 30,500 sq ft lot along the Northwest Arm. At this time, only a clubhouse had been constructed at the end of present-day Fairfield Road. McAlpine's City Directory for 1919-1920 lists the rowing club at 215 (later 213) Coburg Road near Acacia Cottage (across from the Waegwoltic, likely Morrow property), with the boat club identified at the end of Jubilee Road.

In 1930, the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation took over the 1920 mortgages, and in 1931, Stairs' Fairfield home was demolished and replaced by a residence for Roman Catholic archbishops. In 1938, Canadian National Railways renewed the lease for a 63,800 square foot property to St. Mary's Young Men's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society of Halifax for a period of twenty years. The society changed their name to the St. Mary's Young Men's Benevolent Society in 1940. Two years later, the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation took over operation of the St. Mary's Boat Club through an assignment of lease. In 1948, the Club planned an expansion which included the development of four tennis courts, bowling greens and four to six quoit beds. The club also hosted senior and teenage dances, a canteen concession, bridge, bingo, and teas around this time.

In 1974, the City of Halifax began a lease of the boat club from the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for 30 years. Ultimately, due to decline in membership, the Club folded in 1970. From 1970 to 1973, the building was used as a drop-in centre followed by a youth hostel. The clubhouse began to fall into disrepair and by 1988, the city condemned the building making its future uncertain. In 1989, heritage registration for the St. Mary's Boat Club was considered and recommended by the Heritage Advisory Committee; however, it did not proceed as the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation requested a deferral. The city undertook significant structural repairs on the building during the tenure of their lease, costing approximately \$750,000, and officially purchased the land in 1991. Halifax Regional Municipality continues to own and operate the boat club to present day. The club is also home to Atlantic Canada's largest rowing club, the Halifax Rowing Club.

The property has been used for recreational purposes since 1919. Staff recommend a score of between 20 to 25 points.

2. Historical Importance



Figure 2: St. Mary's AA & AC National Winners 1908
(Source: Nova Scotia Archives)

St. Mary's Boat Club has historical associations with the St. Mary's Young Men Temperance Abstinence and Benevolence Society and St. Mary's Amateur Athletic and Aquatics Club. The club is representative of the history of competitive and leisure rowing in Halifax, and the overall history of the Northwest Arm as a popular recreational destination.

The temperance movement took place during the mid 19th and early 20th centuries under the belief that many societal ills were caused by excessive drinking. Alcohol was viewed as delaying economic success, social cohesion, and moral and religious purity. The movement ultimately led to the prohibition of alcohol throughout Canada. One of the first temperance societies in Canada was established in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, in 1827. In 1888, the St. Mary's Young Men's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society was incorporated. The temperance movement began to wane in the 1920s as provincial prohibition laws were repealed.

St. Mary's Amateur Athletic and Aquatics Club (AAAC) was formed in 1874 by the St. Mary's Young Men Temperance Abstinence and Benevolence Society. The racing organization was the first rowing club to introduce the four-oared shell. The club won first place in the third Annual Aquatic Championship held on the Northwest Arm in 1905. By 1908, club members had competed in the National Regatta at Philadelphia, Worcester, and Springfield for the Championship of America, and in 1910, they competed in the Maritime Provincial Championship. In 1909, John O'Neill of St. Mary's AAAC won the Champion of America Single Scull at the National Championship Regatta and won the Detroit Corporation Cup in Senior Singles race. O'Neill was one of the few Canadians to have won this race.

The boat club property provides a physical connection to the history of competitive and leisure rowing in Halifax, as well as the Northwest Arm as a popular recreational destination. After colonial settlement, one of the first rowing races was in 1811 at Halifax Harbour. In 1876, a group of city bankers hosted an amateur scull race on the Northwest Arm, which eventually led to an annual 'Bankers' Regatta'. Considerable interest grew in rowing, and by 1899 the Northwest Arm Rowing Club (NWARC) was formed. NWARC constructed a boathouse in 1901 and hosted their first regatta that same year. The number of boat clubs quickly grew at the turn of the century. The Boulderwood Dinghy and Canoe Club was formed in 1907, and hosted races every Saturday. Two more boat clubs were constructed in 1908 – the Jubilee Boat Club and Waegwoltic. The Halifax Amateur Boating Club (HABC) was also established around this time (1904). The Waegwoltic provided a boathouse for 230 boats and canoes, and the Jubilee Boat Club rented boats to the public, increasing access to the sport. The Independent Boat Club (later Armdale Boat House) brought the total number of craft using the Arm to 1500.

The boat club structure currently on the St. Mary's Boat Club property was constructed circa 1920 on the society's property at the end of Jubilee Road. On the other side of the Harbour in Dartmouth, the Banook Canoe Club was built in 1903 and Mic Mac AAC by 1923. Armdale Yacht Club was established in 1937, and ten years later moved to Melville Island. Beyond rowing, the boat clubs provided significant social value to the public. Waegwoltic, St. Mary's Amateur Athletic Association and NWARC partnered to provide public summer concerts. Illuminations on the Arm were also popular, where recreational and racing yachts strung lights and lanterns on their boats. Participation and boating use waned during World War II, partially due to increased pollution in the Arm and despite many clubs finally opening racing to women. This declining popularity eventually resulted in the demolition of the Northwest Arm Rowing Club and Jubilee Boat Club. St. Mary's Boat Club also faced an uncertain future in the 1970s but under City ownership has been able to continue operation. The Northwest Arm continues to be a popular recreational boating location.

The character defining elements of 1641 Fairfield Road include, but are not limited to:

- Two-storey, wood clad boat club with Colonial Revival influences, including arched roof with returned eaves and diagonal cross balustrades;
- Lawn bowling and tennis court facilities;
- Tree canopy in groupings on slopes and along the south property line; and,
- View of the Northwest Arm and Dingle Tower.

In accordance with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (2010)*, any future management activities need to be in alignment with the above character-defining elements; however, it does not preclude any future changes to individual elements to meet functional goals. In July 2022, Regional Council passed a motion to develop a plan to repair and upgrade the St. Mary's Boat Club for continued recreational use (Halifax Regional Municipality 2022). The draft 2024-2025 Capital Plan has budgeted \$10 million for the rehabilitation project.

As part of the proposed rehabilitation, the building will be raised to a higher elevation to protect the structure from rising sea levels. Alterations may also be required for accessibility purposes, such as additional ramps, modifications for an interior elevator, improved lighting and vehicular access. Other exterior changes proposed include:

- improving stairs, ramps, and kayak and canoe launches, for accessibility purposes;
- upgrades to retaining walls;
- energy retrofits (e.g., solar PV on the roof and cladding, insulation, energy efficient windows); and,

- upgrades to the hall, boathouse, and surrounding site to better accommodate special events and day-to-day functions.

The subject property is representative of the rowing and recreational history of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Canada in its entirety, and as such, staff recommend a score of 15 to 20 points for historical importance.

3. Integrity

The St. Mary's Boat Club property has a good level of integrity. The boat club has had a fair level of alterations, but the original form is still extant, and it remains at its original location. The surrounding context has slightly changed as the St. Mary's Villa social club and original club house at the end of Fairfield Road were demolished. Of the 1940s expansion, the tennis courts and lawn bowling remain. The space for quoits has been replaced with a playground, and the croquet space has been removed.

The subject property has most of its original features and structures, and as such, staff recommend a score of 6 to 10 points for integrity.

4. Context

Relationship to Surrounding Area

St. Mary's Boat Club has historical, physical, and visual associations with the neighbouring Waegwoltic Club on Coburg Road as another early 20th century boat club. This stretch along the Northwest Arm was historically home to St. Mary's, Waegwoltic, and the former Jubilee Boat Club and Northwest Arm Boat Club. St. Mary's Boat Club is one of the only two remaining boat clubs and provides a physical representation of Halifax's boating and recreation history. The boat club also provides clear views of Dingle Tower and has physical, historical, and visual associations with the Northwest Arm.

The site provides a tangible representation of Halifax's rowing history on the Northwest Arm. Staff recommend a score of 6 to 10 points for relationship to surrounding area.



Figure 3: View of Waegwoltic Boat Club (left) and Dingle Tower (centre) from the south elevation of St. Mary's Boat Club (Staff photo, March 30, 2023)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The HRM costs associated with advertising and processing this application can be accommodated within the approved 2023/2024 operating budget for C340 – Culture, Heritage and Planning Information Services. Additional funding may be needed for the planned rehabilitation project should the property be successfully registered as a heritage property.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process for heritage registrations is consistent with the intent of the HRM Community Engagement Strategy. The level of community engagement was information sharing achieved through public access to the required Heritage Advisory Committee meeting. The property owner is HRM and as such, Regional Council review is sufficient in accordance with the *Heritage Property Act*.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant environmental implications associated with the recommendations in this report.

ALTERNATIVE

1. The Heritage Advisory Committee may choose to refuse the application to include 1641 Fairfield Road, Halifax in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality if the property scores less than 35 based on the site evaluation criteria.

ATTACHMENTS

Map 1: Location Map

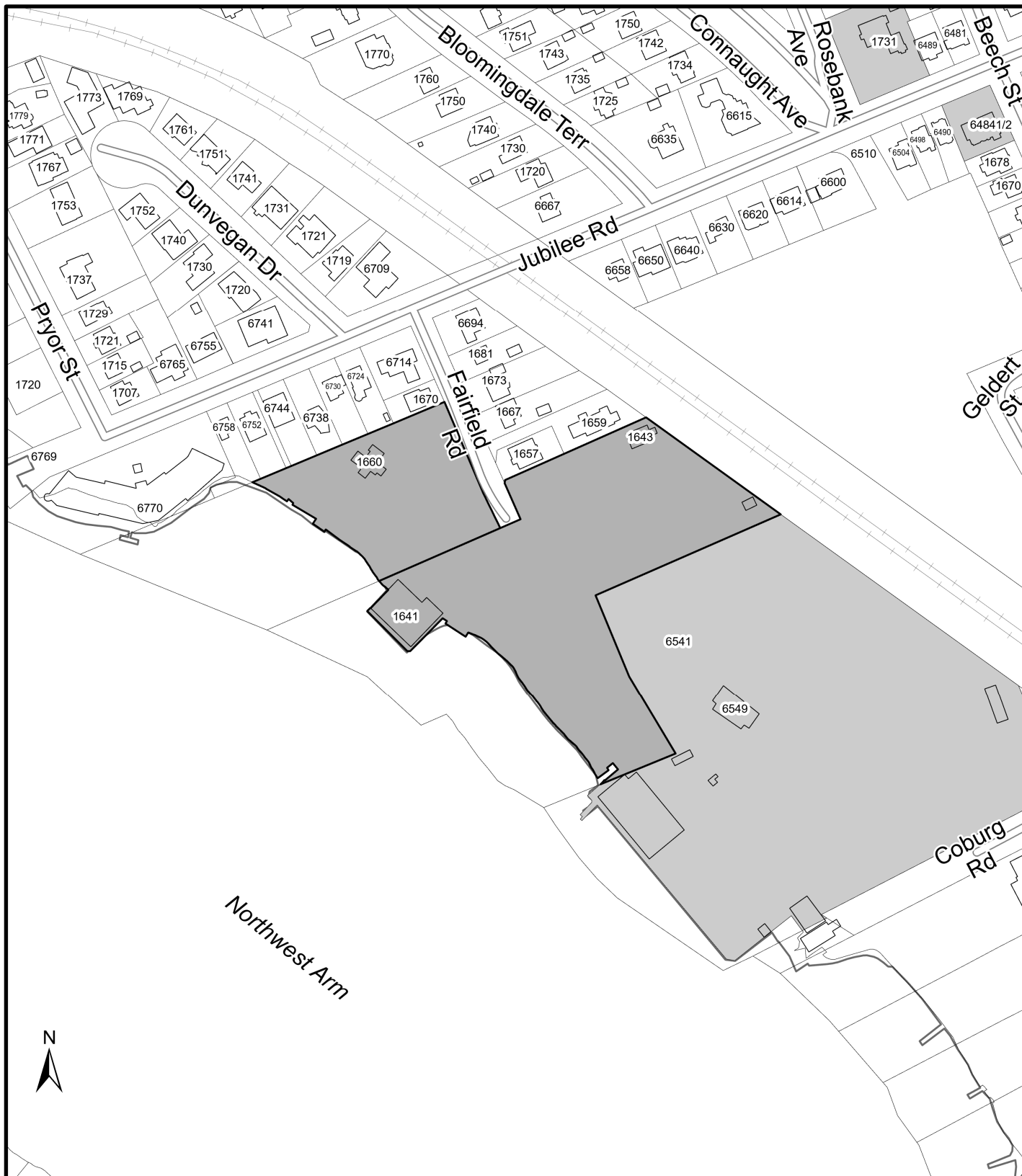
Attachment A: Heritage Site Evaluation Criteria

Attachment B: Heritage Building Evaluation Criteria

Attachment C: Staff Research Report

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Elizabeth Cushing, Planner II – Heritage, 902.478.2586



Map 1 - Location Map

1641 Fairfield Road,
Halifax

- Registered Heritage Property
- Subject Property



HRM does not guarantee the accuracy of any representation on this plan.

Attachment A - Evaluation of Sites

EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION OF HERITAGE SITES HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

A Heritage site is defined as an area, cultural landscape, or feature, together with any structures thereon, which is significant to the social, cultural, commercial, military or political history and development of Halifax Regional Municipality, the Region, Province or Country. *The Heritage Value* of a site is derived from a number of sources, including age of a site or duration of use, as well as community and historical associations.

1. AGE OF SITE/CONTINUITY OF USE

1 a) Age of Site

Age is an important factor in the popular understanding of the value of heritage sites. The following age categories are based on local, national and international occasions that may be considered to have defined the character of what is the Halifax Regional Municipality and how it was developed. A site may receive points for its age **or** its continuity of use.

Date of Original Use	Points	Timeline
1749 - 1785	23-25	Halifax Garrison Town to the Loyalist migration
1786 - 1830	20-22	Boom period following construction of the Shubenacadie Canal
1831 - 1867	17-19	From Boom to Confederation
1868 - 1899	14-16	Confederation to the end of the 19 th Century
1900 - 1917	11-13	Turn of the Century to the Halifax Harbour Explosion
1918 -1945	8-10	The War Years
1946 - Present	5-7	Post-War

OR

1 b) Continuity of Use

A site may also be deemed to have heritage value because it has served the same function or a similar function over a long period of time.

Duration of Continue/Similar Function	Points	Comments
100+ Years	20-25	
75-99 Years	15-19	
50-74 Years	10-14	

Maximum score of 25 points in this category.

2. HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

Historical importance refers to relationships to important occasions, institutions, individuals or groups.

Nationally	Points	Comments: Please give reference to relationship below
Intimately Related	20-25	
Moderately Related	15-20	
Loosely Related	10-15	
Provincially	Points	Comments: Please give reference to relationship below
Intimately Related	15-20	
Moderately Related	10-15	
Loosely Related	5-10	
Locally	Points	Comments: Please give reference to relationship below
Intimately Related	10-15	
Moderately Related	5-10	
Loosely Related	0-5	

** Maximum score of 25 points in this category - scoring from only one of three categories.*

3. INTEGRITY

Integrity refers to the degree to which the site reflects its original state during the period it was used. This may include the presence of physical features or structures.

Points	Comments
6-10	Largely intact with presence of original features or structures
1-5	Moderately intact with vestiges of original features or structures

Maximum score of 10 points in this category.

4. CONTEXT

A site may receive points for its relationship to its surrounding area **or** for its inherent value to the community.

4 a) Relationship to Surrounding Area

Points	Comments
6-10	The site is an important asset contributing to the heritage character of the surrounding area
1-5	The site is compatible with the surrounding area and maintains its heritage character

OR**4 b) Community Value**

Points	Comments
6-10	The site is well documented in local history (written or oral)
1-5	The site is little known or not documented in local history

Maximum score of 10 points for either relationship to surrounding area or community value for this category.

SCORING SUMMARY

PROPERTY	DATE REVIEWED	REVIEWER

Criterion	Highest possible Score	Score Awarded
1. a) Age of Site or 1. b) Continuity of Use	25	
2. Historical Importance	25	
3. Degree of Intactness	10	
4. a) Relationship to Surrounding Area or 4. b) Community Value	10	
TOTAL	70	

Score necessary for designation**35**

Designation Recommended?

YES

NO

Comments:

Attachment B- Evaluation of Buildings

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY HERITAGE PROPERTY PROGRAM EVALUATION CRITERIA

**EVALUATION CRITERIA
FOR REGISTRATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS (Revised 2004)**

1. AGE

Age is probably the single most important factor in the popular understanding of the heritage value of buildings. The following age categories are based on local, national and international occasions that may be considered to have defined the character of what is how the Halifax Regional Municipality and its architecture.

Date of Construction	Points	Timeline
1749 - 1785	25	Halifax Garrison Town to the Loyalist migration
1786 - 1830	20	Boom period following construction of Shubenacadie Canal
1831 - 1867	16	From Boom to Confederation
1868 - 1899	13	Confederation to the end of the 19 th century
1900 - 1917	9	Turn of the Century to Halifax Harbour Explosion
1918 - 1945	5	The War Years
1945 - Present	3	Post-War

** Maximum score of 25 points in this category*

2. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

A building can receive points for:

- A) Having specific associations with important occasions, institutions, personages and groups,
OR
B) For being architecturally important unique/representative of a particular period.

2A) Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups

Nationally	Points	Comments
Intimately Related	16 - 20	
Moderately Related	11 - 15	
Loosely Related	1 - 10	
Provincially	Points	Comments
Intimately Related	11 - 15	
Moderately Related	6 - 10	
Loosely Related	1 - 5	

Locally	Points	Comments
Intimately Related	11 - 15	
Moderately Related	6 - 10	
Loosely Related	1 - 5	
No relationship to important occasions, institutions, personages or groups.	0	

** Maximum score of 20 points in this category, scoring from one of the three categories only*

2B) Important/Unique Architectural Style or Highly Representative of an Era

Importance	Points	Comments
Highly important, Unique, or representative of an era	16 - 20	
Moderately important, Unique, or representative of an era	11 - 15	
Somewhat important, or representative of an era	10 - 1	
Not important, Unique, or representative of an era	0	

** Maximum score of 20 points in this category.*

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF ARCHITECT/BUILDER

Is the structure representative of the work of an architect or builder of local, provincial or national importance?

Status	Points	Comments
Nationally	7 - 10	
Provincially Significant	4 - 6	
Locally Significant	1 - 3	
Not Significant	0	

** Maximum score of 10 points in this category.*

4. ARCHITECTURAL MERIT

The assessment of architectural merit is based on two factors:

A) **Construction type/building technology**: which refers to the method by which the structure was built (early or rare uses of materials), and building techniques;

AND

B) **Style**: which refers to the form or appearance of the architecture.

Construction Type/Building Technology		
A) Construction type	Points	Comments
Very rare/ early example	7 - 10	
Moderately rare/ early	4 - 6	
Somewhat rare/ early example	1 - 3	
Not rare/ common example	0	
B) Style	Points	Comments
Very rare/ early example	7 - 10	
Moderately rare/ early	4 - 6	
Somewhat rare/ early example	1 - 3	
Not rare/ common example	0	

** Maximum score of 10 points for Construction Type, and a maximum score of 10 for Style - a total maximum of 20 points in this category.*

5. ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY

Architectural Integrity refers to the extent to which the building retains original features/ structures/ styles, not the state of the building's condition.

Architecture	Consider any additions/ removal/ alterations to windows, doors, porches, dormers, roof lines, foundations, chimneys, and cladding.	
Exterior	Points	Comments
Largely unchanged	11 - 15	
Modest changes	6 - 10	
Major changes	1 - 5	
Seriously compromised	0	

** Maximum score of 15 points in this category.*

6. RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING AREA

Points	Comments
6 - 10	The building is an important architectural asset contributing to the heritage character of the surrounding area.
1 - 5	The Architecture is compatible with the surrounding area and maintains its heritage character.
0	Does not contribute to the character of the surrounding area.

** Maximum score of 10 points in this category.*

SCORING SUMMARY

Property	Date Reviewed	Reviewer

Criterion	Highest Possible Score	Score Awarded
1. Age	25	
2. a) Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups OR 2. b) Important, Unique Architectural Style, or Highly Representative of an Era	20	
3. Significance of Architect or Builder	10	
4. a) Architectural Merit: Construction type/building technology	10	
4. b) Architectural Merit: Style	10	
5. Architectural Integrity	15	
6. Relationship to Surrounding Area	10	
Total	100	

SCORE NECESSARY FOR DESIGNATION**50****Designation Recommended?****YES****NO****COMMENTS:**

Attachment C

Research Report

**St. Mary's Boat Club,
1641 Fairfield Road, Halifax**

Prepared by:

HRM Planning & Development
Elizabeth Cushing, Planner II - Heritage

17 July 2023



HALIFAX

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Age of Site & Continuity of Use

St. Mary's Boat Club (1641 Fairfield Road) is situated at the south end of Fairfield Road, on the block bound by Jubilee Road to the north and Coburg Road to the south.

The St. Mary's Amateur Athletic and Aquatics Club (AAAC) was founded in 1874 by the St. Mary's Young Mens Temperance Abstinence and Benevolence Society for the enjoyment of Catholic youth in Halifax (Withrow 1989; MemoryNS n.d.). A rowing and aquatics club at the Halifax Harbour was formed in 1876. The first club was located at Power's Wharf, followed by Butler's Spar Dock (between present day Cogswell and Duke Streets). In 1900, the society decided to move to the Northwest Arm waters and were briefly located on the Oakland property (south of Robie Street and east of Oakland Road; Withrow 1989).

In *Sketches and Traditions of the Northwest Arm* by John W. Regan (1908), Regan provides a detailed history of St. Mary's AAAC. The club was leasing land from Geoffrey Morrow who allowed the club to build a small yellow boathouse for shells on his property at the foot of Coburg Road (Figure 1; Watts and Raymond 2003). When the property transferred ownership to Fred W. Bowes, the lease continued. Morrow's property was located to the east of the current boat club location, near present day Birchdale Avenue (Birchdale being the name of Morrow's estate). Regan references a new boating club to be established fronting the Arm between Coburg Road and Jubilee Road on lands previously owned by Henry Pryor, known as Hillside (Regan 1908; Figure 2 and Figure 3). The property is described as bound on the north by Jubilee Road, extending south along the shore of the Arm 600 feet, and east along Jubilee Road 600 feet.

Following the death of William Pryor Sr. in 1859, Pryor's sons began to divide some of his properties which included all the lands fronting the Northwest Arm from Quinpool Road to South Street (Watts and Raymond 2003; Nova Scotia Archives 2023). Three brothers-in-law (who also were linked to the family business, William Stairs, Son, and Morrow) John Stairs, Robert Morrow, and Hon. Alfred Gilpin Jones, purchased Pryor properties on either side of Coburg Road. Henry Pryor sold the east portion of his 'Hillside' property on the south side of Jubilee Road in 1869 to John Stairs (Book 168, Page 147; Figure 4). Prior to this in 1861, Stairs had purchased a portion of the neighbouring property to the east from the Hon. Alfred Jones, and the road leading to the estate in 1866 (Book 133, Page 7 and Book 258, Page 252). Stairs named the resulting estate 'Fairfield' (Figure 5 and Figure 6). James Walker, a doctor, purchased the remainder of Pryor's 'Hillside' property in 1883 (Book 242, Page 135) and sold to Charles Willoughby Anderson in 1892 (Page 285, Page 407). The Fairfield estate sold from the Stairs family to James Fraser in 1891 (Book 280, Page 287). Excluding a portion along Jubilee Road, Anderson's property was granted to Eastern Trust Company in 1912 (Book 425, Page 317).

The boat club had not yet been constructed by 1918 (Figure 7); however, that same year, the St. Mary's Young Men's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society made an application with the Minister of Public Works under the *Navigable Waters Protection Act, 1906*, to construct a boathouse on the Northwest Arm (Minister of Public Works 1918). The plan for the boat club notes that the remaining portion of the former 'Hillside' property was to be conveyed to the City of Halifax (Figure 8). In 1919, the boat club was established as St. Mary's Boat Club. These initiatives were led by Grace Archbishop John T. McNally.

The Fraser family retained ownership of Fairfield until 1920 when they sold to the Saint Mary's Young Mens Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society (Book 508, Page 695; Figure 9). The

Fairfield home was turned into a social club run by the society, who called it St. Mary's Villa (Watts and Raymond 2003). That same year, Eastern Trust Company sold a portion of the Anderson property to the society (Book 443, Page 646 and Book 526, Page 49), and a portion of land owned by the Crown for the railway was leased to the society for an annual sum of \$100.00 (Book 508, Page 695). The accompanying plan surveyed in 1920 shows that the society had a 30,500 sq ft lot along the Northwest Arm (Figure 10). At this time, only a clubhouse had been constructed at the end of present-day Fairfield Road. McAlpine's City Directory for 1919-1920 lists the rowing club at 215 (later 213) Coburg Road near Acacia Cottage (across from the Waegwoltic, likely Morrow property), with the boat club identified at the end of Jubilee Road.

In 1930, the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation took over the society's 1920 mortgages (Book 664, Page 59), and in 1931, Stairs' Fairfield home was demolished and replaced by a residence for Roman Catholic archbishops. In 1938, Canadian National Railways renewed the lease for a 63,800 square foot property to St. Mary's Young Men's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society of Halifax (Canadian National Railways Lease 31512) for a period of twenty years. The society changed their name to the St. Mary's Young Men's Benevolent Society in 1940. Two years later, the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation took over operation of the St. Mary's Boat Club through an assignment of lease (Book 842, Page 566). Around this time, the City of Halifax began to explore the creation of a subdivision surrounding the boat club. In 1948, the Club planned an expansion which included the development of four tennis courts, bowling greens and four to six quoit beds (Figure 11). A landscape gardener from the Provincial government was contracted for the work. The club also hosted senior and teenage dances, a canteen concession, bridge, bingo, and teas.

In 1974, the City of Halifax began a lease of the boat club from the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation for 30 years (Book 2857, Page 329). The Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation also sold the north portion of the neighbouring Archbishop's Residence to the Waegwoltic Club around this time (Book 2417, Page 826). The City leased a 77-foot strip of land, formerly part of the railway land, to the St. Mary's Boat Club in the 1970s to straighten the north boundary of the property. Ultimately, due to decline in membership, the Club folded in 1970 (Withrow 1989). From 1970 to 1973, the building was used as a drop-in centre followed by a youth hostel. The clubhouse began to fall into disrepair and by 1988, the city condemned the building making its future uncertain. In 1989, heritage registration for the St. Mary's Boat Club was considered and recommended by the Heritage Advisory Committee; however, it did not proceed as the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation requested a deferral.

The city undertook significant structural repairs on the building during the tenure of their lease, costing approximately \$750,000, and officially purchased the land in 1991 (Book 5025, Page 334; Watts and Raymond 2003; Halifax Regional Municipality 2022). This included the remaining south portion of the Archbishops Residence property, which was subsequently sold to the Waegwoltic Club (Book 6680, Page 376). The St. Mary's Boat Club land was subdivided in 2000 (Figure 12). Halifax Regional Municipality continues to own and operate the boat club property to present day. The club is home to Atlantic Canada's largest rowing club, the Halifax Rowing Club.

The present-day St. Mary's Boat Club property has been used for recreational purposes since 1919, and currently sits on both the former Fairfield and Pryor properties.



Figure 1: Robert Morrow's property as depicted in Hopkin's 1878 City Atlas. A wood structure is depicted along the coastline of the Northwest Arm.

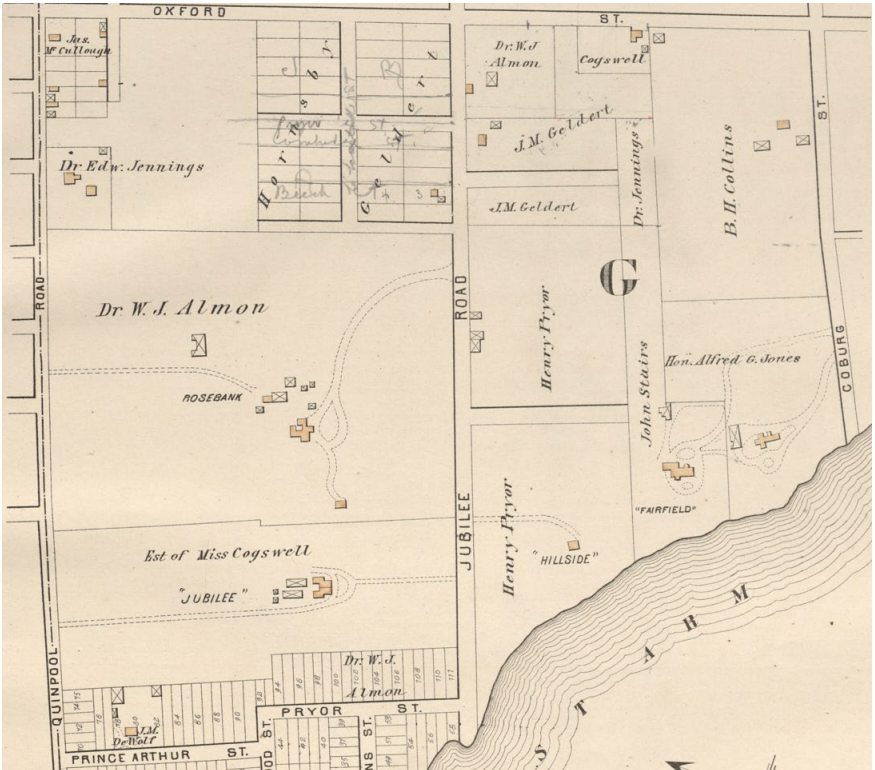


Figure 2: John Stairs 'Fairfield' property and Henry Pryor's 'Hillside' property as identified in Hopkin's 1878 City Atlas



Figure 3: Henry Pryor's 'Hillside' Estate ca. 1878 (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)



Figure 5: John Stairs "Fairfield" Estate, undated (Source: Watts and Raymond 2003)



Figure 6: Fairfield Estate circa 1930 (Source: McGuigan)

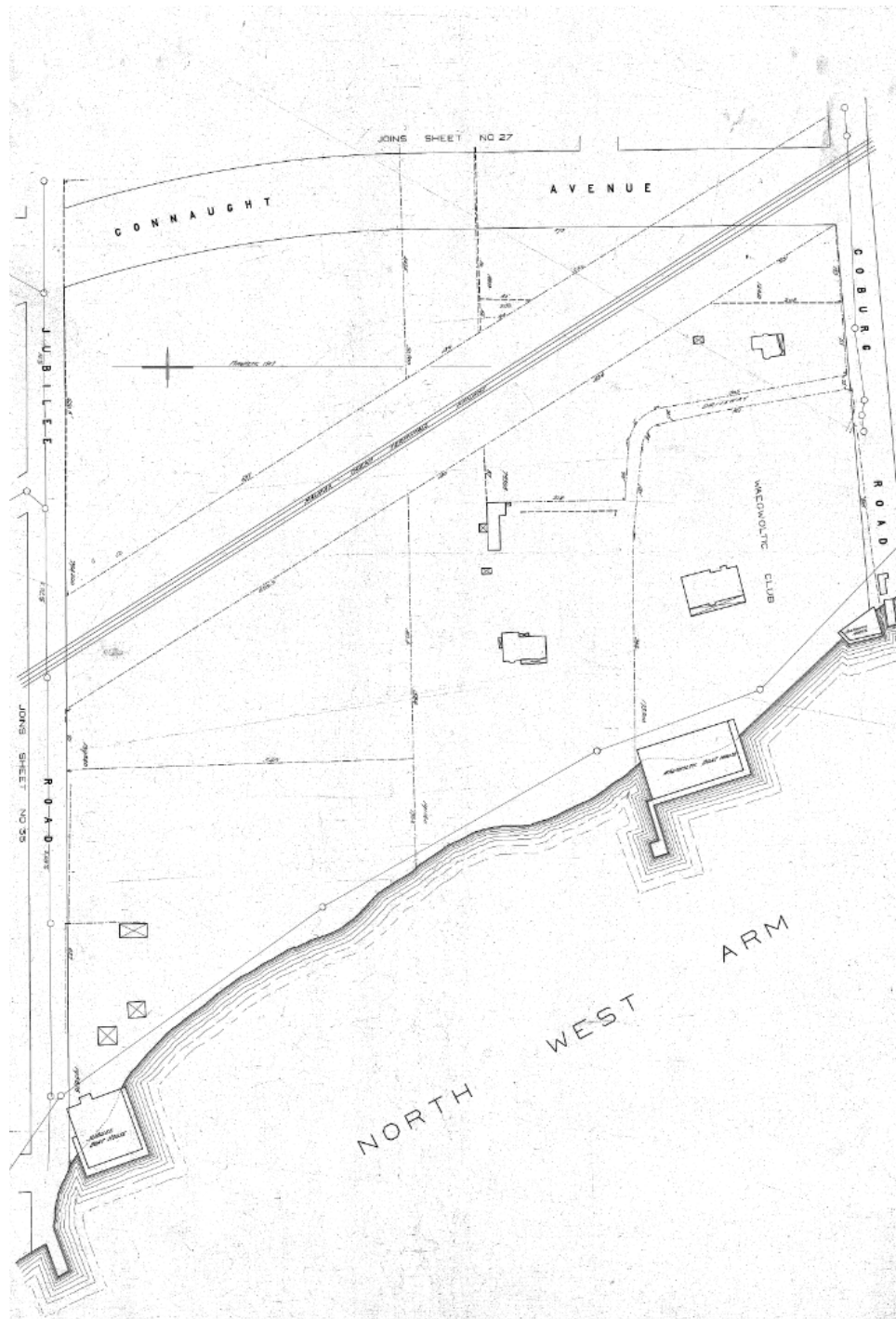


Figure 7: 1918 Assessment Map of Halifax which shows the St. Mary's Boat Club had not yet been built. Waegwoltic is visible to the right and Jubilee Boat Club to the left. The railway runs through the centre.

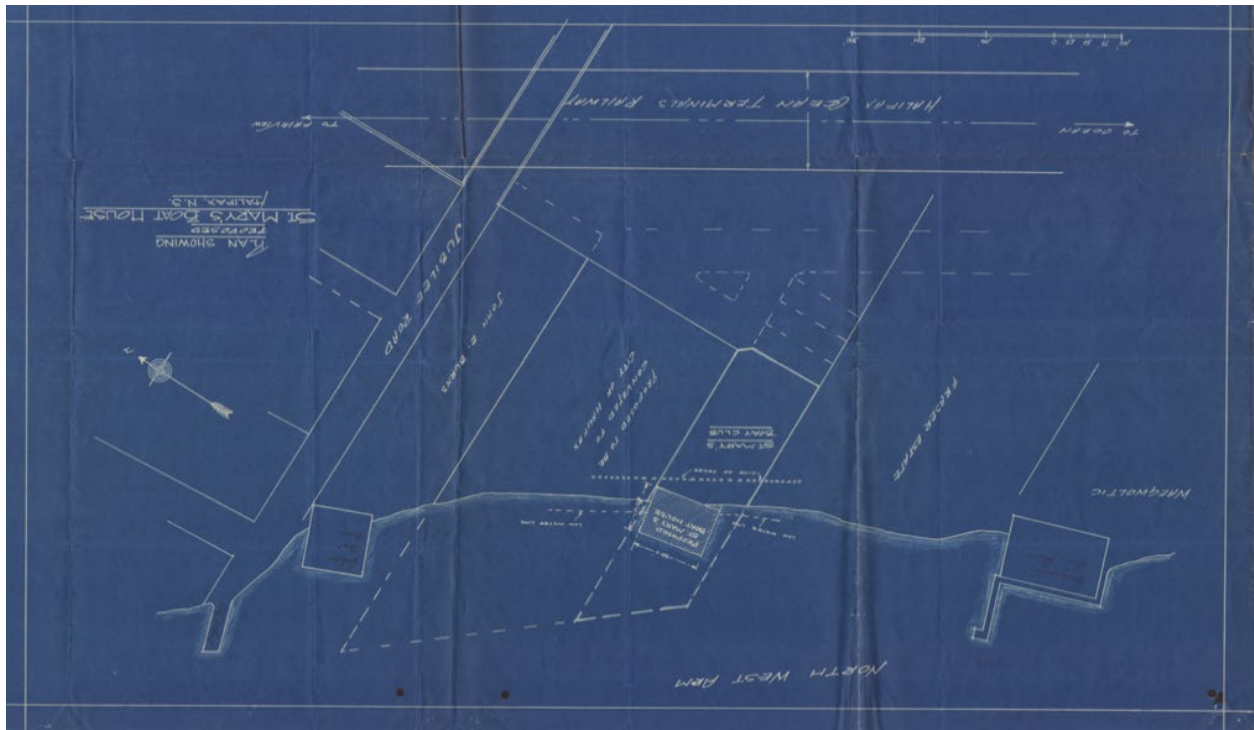


Figure 8: Plan showing proposed location of St. Mary's Boat House, 1918, with adjacent land to be conveyed to the City of Halifax (Surveyor Unknown)

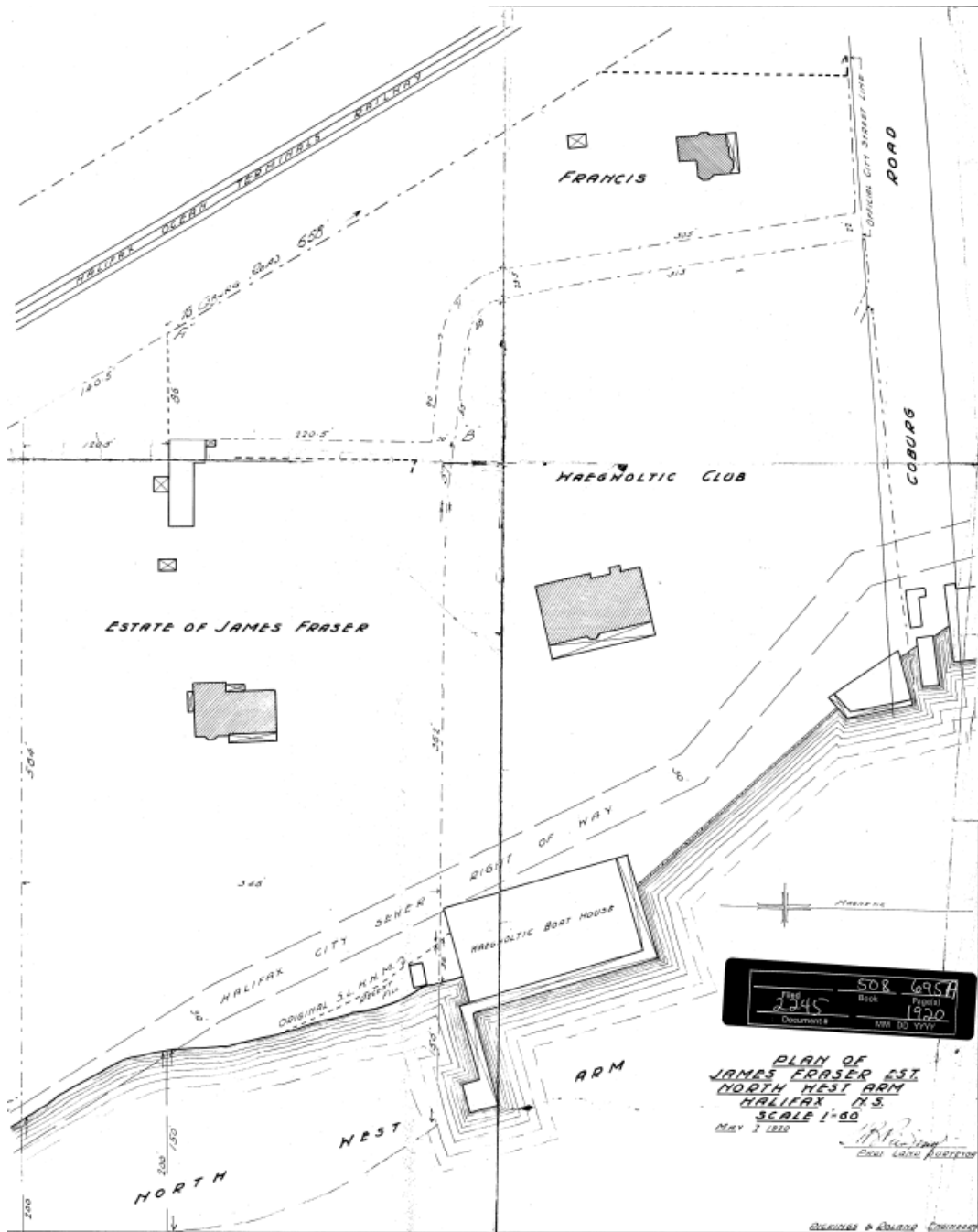


Figure 9: Plan of James Fraser Estate transfer to St. Mary's Abstinence and Benevolent Society, 1920 (Surveyor: Pickings)

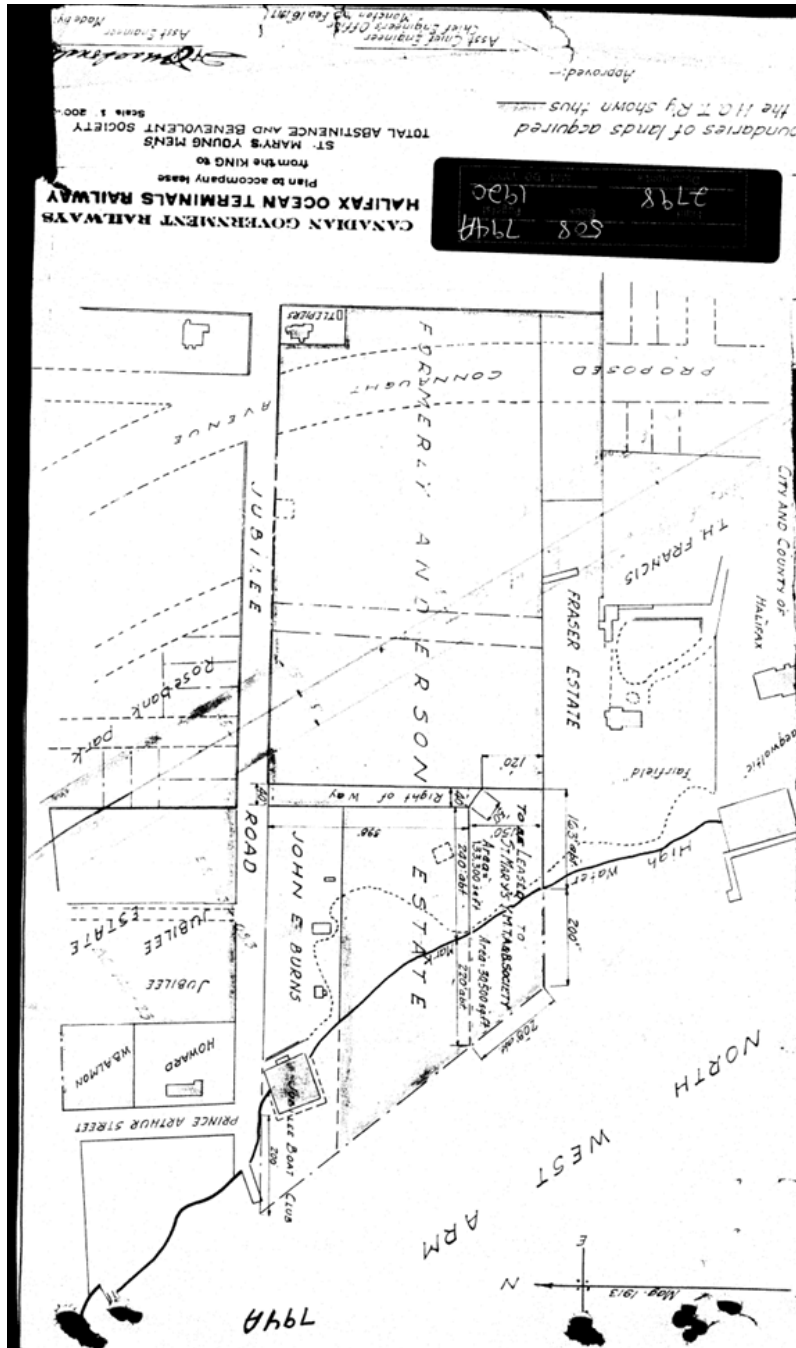


Figure 10: Canadian Government Railways Halifax Ocean Terminals Railway Plan to Accompany Lease from the King to St. Mary's Young Men's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society. The clubhouse structure is visible at the end of present-day Fairfield Road (Surveyor Unknown, 1920)

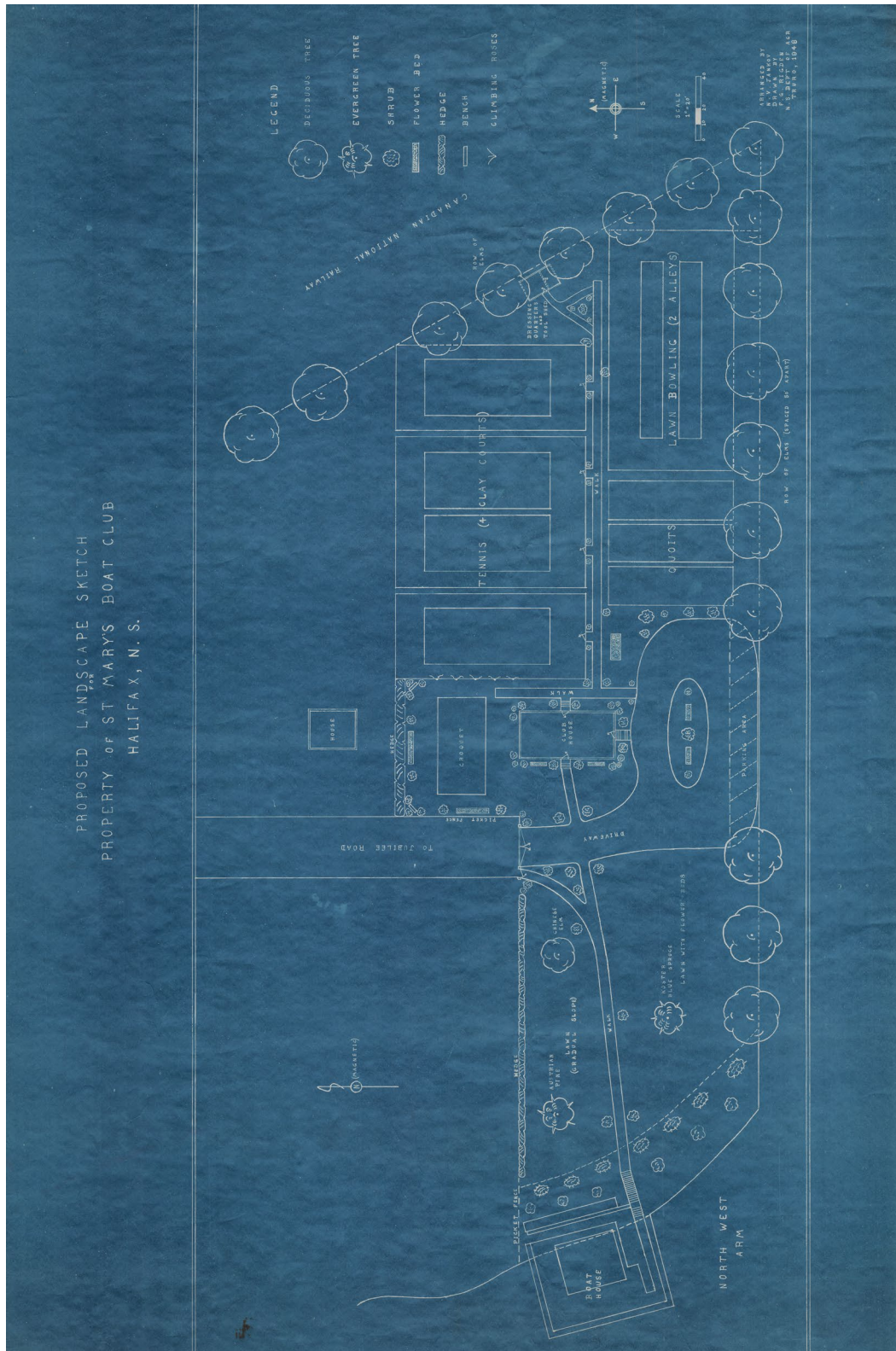


Figure 11: Landscape sketch of Saint Mary's Boat Club property circa 1948 (Drawn by F.G. Rigden; Source: Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth Archives)

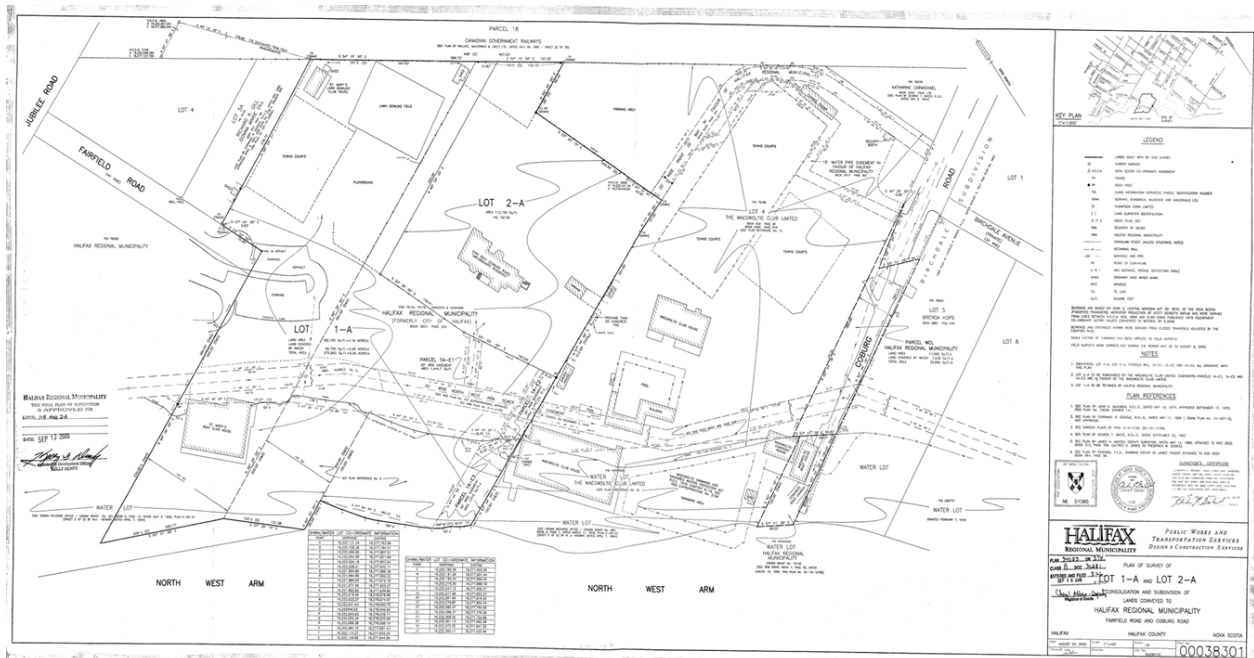


Figure 12: Subdivision Plan of the St. Mary's Boat Club Property (left) from 2000 (Document #34085)

Historical Importance

St. Mary's Boat Club has historical associations with the St. Mary's Young Men Temperance Abstinence and Benevolence Society and St. Mary's Amateur Athletic and Aquatics Club. The club is representative of the history of competitive and leisure rowing in Halifax, and the overall history of the Northwest Arm as a popular recreational destination.

The temperance movement took place during the mid 19th and early 20th centuries under the belief that many societal ills were caused by excessive drinking (Decarie 2020). Alcohol was viewed as delaying economic success, social cohesion, and moral and religious purity. The movement ultimately led to the prohibition of alcohol throughout Canada. One of the first temperance societies in Canada was established in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, in 1827 (Decarie 2020). In 1843, St. Mary's and St. Patrick's Parishes joined together to form a temperance society, and the Halifax Catholic Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society was founded in 1857 (Halifax Catholic Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society 1858). In 1888, the St. Mary's Young Men's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society was incorporated (Figure 13). Ultimately, the temperance movement began to wane in the 1920s as provincial prohibition laws were repealed.

St. Mary's Amateur Athletic and Aquatics Club (AAAC) was formed in 1874 by the St. Mary's Young Men Temperance Abstinence and Benevolence Society. The racing organization was the first rowing club to introduce the four-oared shell (Figure 14; Regan 1908). Local rowing prior to this had been performed in lapstreak boats. The club won first place in the third Annual Aquatic Championship held on the Northwest Arm in 1905 (Withrow 1989). By 1908, club members had competed in the National Regatta at Philadelphia, Worcester, and Springfield for the Championship of America, and in 1910, they competed in the Maritime Provincial Championship (Figure 15). In 1909, John O'Neill of St. Mary's AAAC won the Champion of America Single Scull at the National Championship Regatta and won the Detroit Corporation Cup in Senior Singles race (Figure 16). O'Neill was one of the few Canadians to have won this race. As mentioned in the Age section, St. Mary's Rowing Club relocated several times, first at the Halifax Harbour and moving to the Northwest Arm around the turn of the century. Previous research dates the boat club to 1905; however, no documentation could be found to confirm this (Withrow 1989). Based on the 1920 plan of the property, a small clubhouse was constructed on the current 1641 Fairfield Road property prior to the construction of the boat house (see Figure 10 and Figure 11) which was demolished by 1955 (see Figure 38). The St. Mary's Young Men Temperance Abstinence and Benevolence Society also owned the neighbouring property with their social club, St. Mary's Villa (former Fairfield residence).

The Northwest Arm was a travel route and known as Waegwoltic by the Mi'kmaw, meaning "end of the water". Both the Mi'kmaq and Acadians held annual seafood feasts at the furthest extent of the Arm, named the annual feast of St. Aspinquid. The festival continued to be celebrated on the Northwest Arm until around 1776 (Collins 1987; All the Kings Men n.d.).

The boat club provides a physical connection to the history of competitive and leisure rowing in Halifax, as well as the Northwest Arm as a popular recreational destination. After colonial settlement, one of the first rowing races was in 1811 at Halifax Harbour (Rowing Canada Aviron 2023). In 1876, a group of city bankers hosted an amateur scull race on the Northwest Arm, which eventually led to an annual 'Bankers' Regatta' (Watts and Raymond 2003). Considerable interest grew in rowing, and by 1899 the Northwest Arm Rowing Club (NWARC) was formed (Figure 17). NWARC constructed a boathouse in 1901 and hosted their first regatta that same year. The

number of boat clubs quickly grew at the turn of the century. The Boulderwood Dinghy and Canoe Club was formed in 1907, and hosted races every Saturday (Watts and Raymond 2003). Two more boat clubs were constructed in 1908 – the Jubilee Boat Club and Waegwoltic (Regan 1908; Figure 18 and Figure 19). The Halifax Amateur Boating Club (HABC) was also established around this time (1904; Watts and Raymond 2003). The Waegwoltic provided a boathouse for 230 boats and canoes, and the Jubilee Boat Club rented boats to the public, increasing access to the sport. The Independent Boat Club (later Armdale Boat House) brought the total number of craft using the Arm to 1500 (Watts and Raymond 2003:64).

Regattas increased in popularity, with an established route starting from Thornvale estate to Horseshoe Island and back. Another course from South Street to Maplewood estate was also added (Watts and Raymond 2003). St. Mary's Boat Club was constructed circa 1920 on their clubhouse property at the end of Jubilee Road (Figure 20). On the other side of the Harbour in Dartmouth, the Banook Canoe Club was built in 1903 and Mic Mac AAC by 1923 (Figure 21 and Figure 22). Armdale Yacht Club was established in 1937, and ten years later moved to Melville Island. Beyond rowing, the boat clubs provided significant social value to the public. Waegwoltic, St. Mary's Amateur Athletic Association and NWARC partnered to provide public summer concerts. The Waegwoltic hosted band concerts, fundraised and hosted Red Cross events for returning soldiers during World War I, and operated as a hospital during the Halifax Explosion (Figure 23). Illuminations on the Arm were also popular, where recreational and racing yachts strung lights and lanterns on their boats (Watts and Raymond 2003). The opening of the Memorial Tower in 1912 was one of the notable events on the Arm, with attendees including the Duke of Connaught, Lord Mayor of Bristol, the Governor General, and Sir Sandford Fleming. Lunch was served at the Waegwoltic Club and an afternoon regatta took place. In the evening, there was an illuminated boat procession and the Grand Illumination of the Arm, with the Memorial Tower outlined in lights (Watts and Raymond 2003).

Participation and boating use waned during World War II, partially due to increased pollution in the Arm and despite many clubs finally opening racing to women. This eventually resulted in the demolition of the Northwest Arm Rowing Club and Jubilee Boat Club. St. Mary's Boat Club also faced an uncertain future in the 1970s but under City ownership has been able to continue operation. The Northwest Arm continues to be a popular recreational boating location.

The character defining elements of 1641 Fairfield Road include, but are not limited to:

- Two-storey, wood clad boat club with Colonial Revival style influences, including arched roof with wood returned eaves and diagonal cross balustrades;
- Lawn bowling and tennis court facilities;
- Tree canopy in groupings on slopes and along the south property line; and,
- View of the Northwest Arm and Dingle Tower.

In accordance with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (2010)*, any future management activities need to be in alignment with the above character-defining elements; however, it does not preclude any future changes to individual elements to meet functional goals.

In July 2022, Regional Council passed a motion to develop a plan to repair and upgrade the St. Mary's Boat Club for continued recreational use (Halifax Regional Municipality 2022). As part of the proposed rehabilitation, the building will be raised to a higher elevation to protect the structure from rising sea levels. Other exterior changes proposed include:

- improving stairs, ramps, and kayak and canoe launches, for accessibility purposes;
- upgrades to retaining walls; and,
- upgrades to the hall, boathouse, and surrounding site to better accommodate special events and day-to-day functions.



Figure 13: St. Mary's Young Men's Total Abstinence and Benevolent Society, 1888 (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)

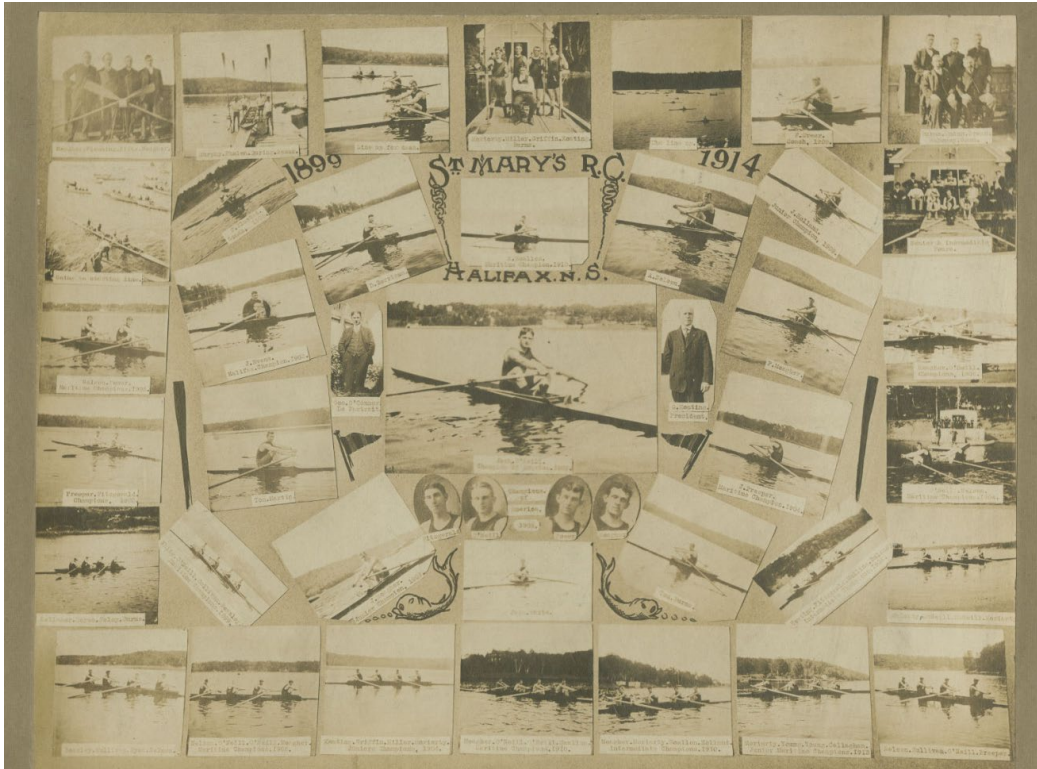


Figure 14: St. Mary's Rowing Club 1899-1914 (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)

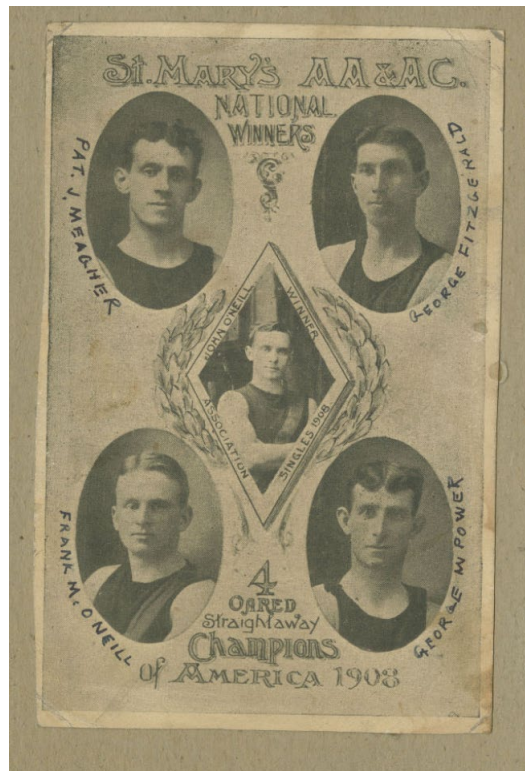


Figure 15: St. Mary's AA & AC National Winners of Champions of America, 1908 (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)

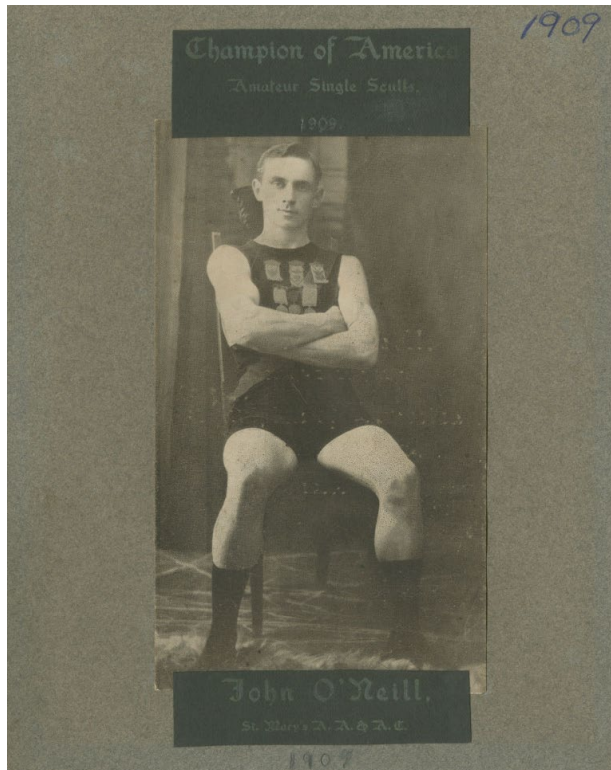


Figure 16: Photo of John O'Neill of St. Mary's AA & AC, 1909 (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)

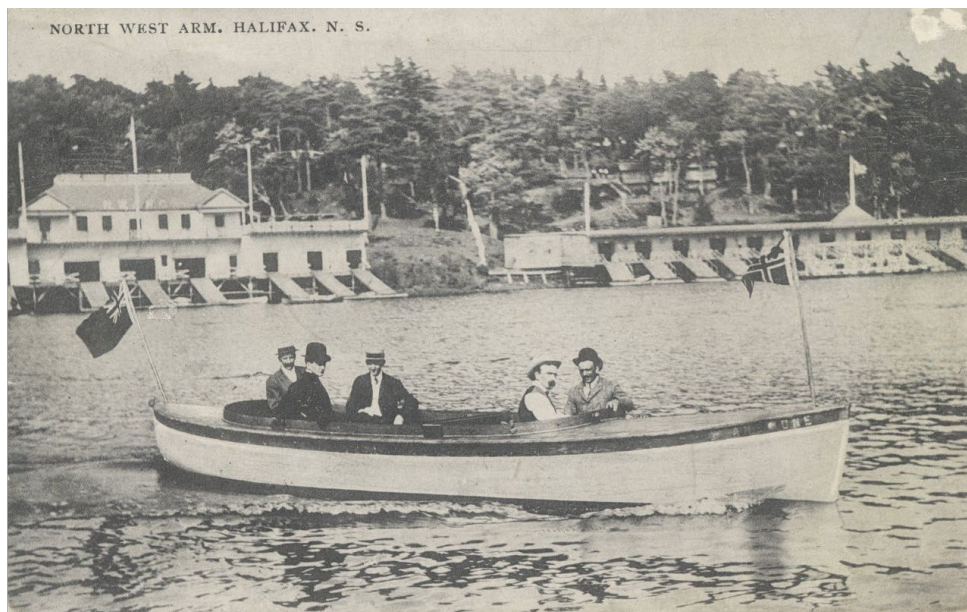


Figure 17: Northwest Arm Boat Club circa 1908 (Source: Oakville Public Library)



Figure 18: Undated photo of Jubilee Boat House, formerly located to the west of St. Mary's Boat Club at the end of Jubilee Road (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)



Figure 19: Undated photo of Waegwoltic Club (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)



Figure 20: St. Mary's Boat Club ca. 1931. Jubilee Boat Club, Waegwoltic, and Northwest Arm Boat Club are also visible (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)

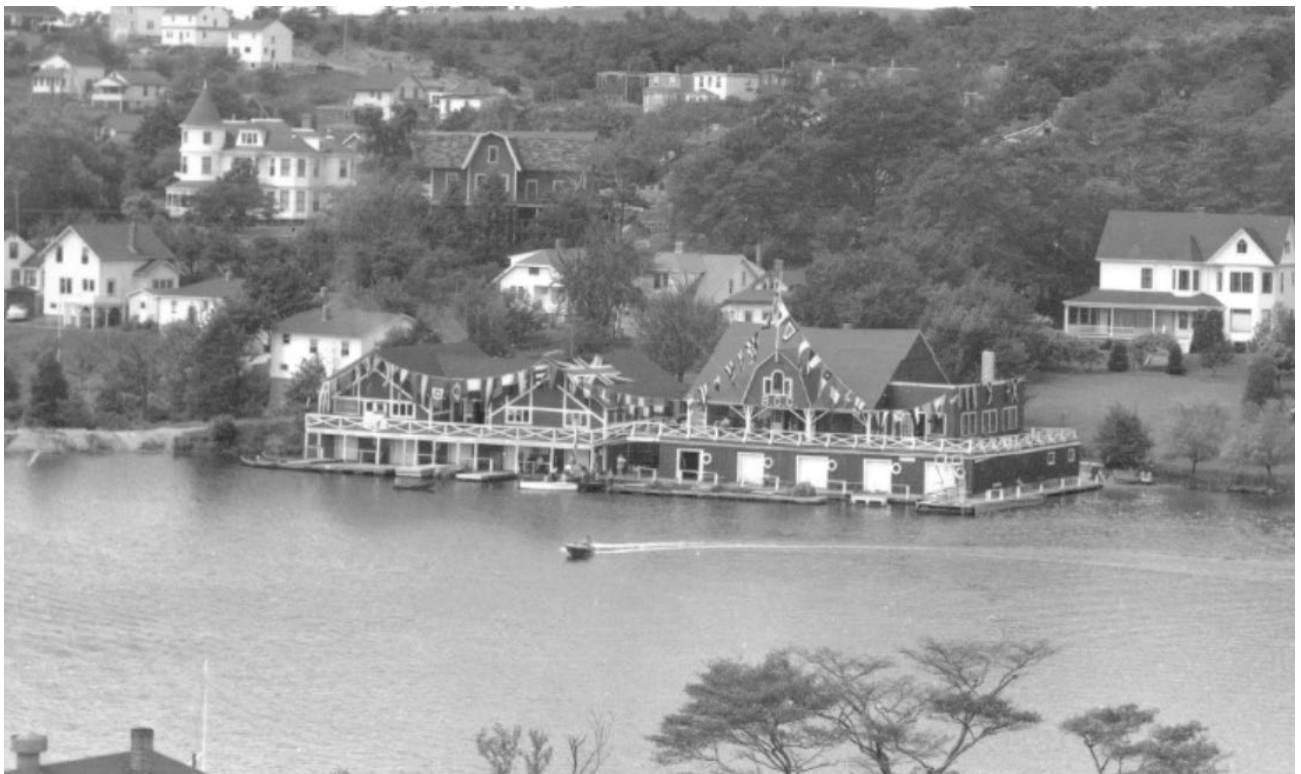


Figure 21: Banook Canoe Club, undated (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)

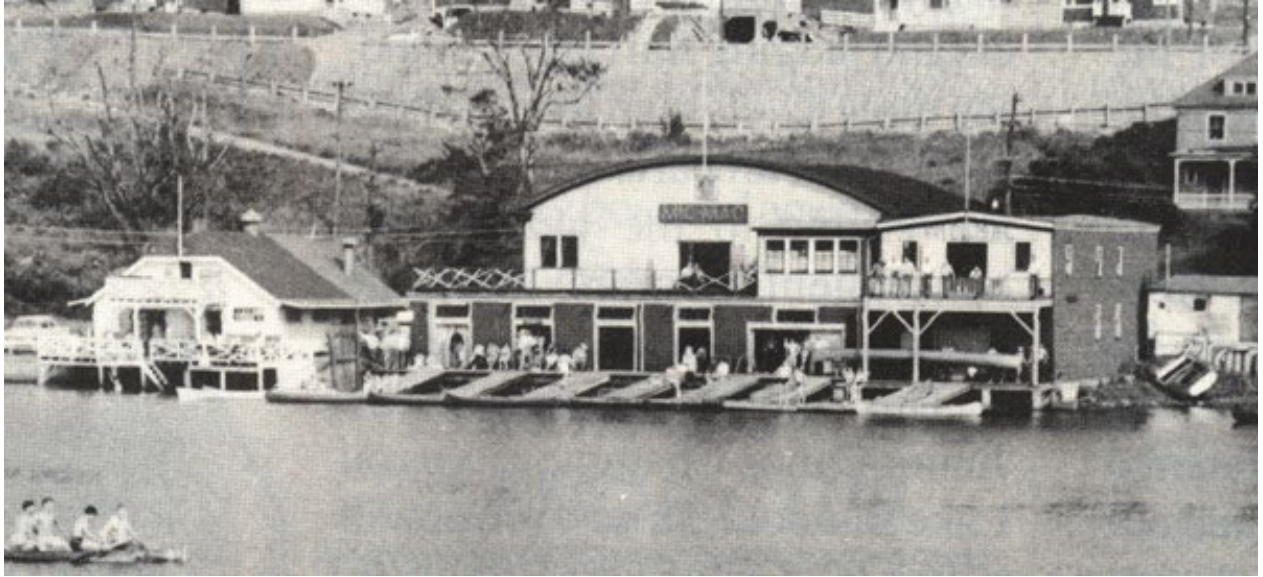


Figure 22: Mic Mac AAC circa 1940s (Source: Canada's Spring Canoe Clubs and Mic Mac AAC 2023)



Figure 23: An event at the Waegwoltic circa 1909 (Source: Henry Dodge)

Design

Architecture

The main structure at 1641 Fairfield Road, the boat club, is built on wood cribs supporting a concrete slab with a wood superstructure supporting wood joists and wood deck for the second floor (Halifax Regional Municipality 2022). A wood roof truss supports a wood deck and roof system. The boat club is a two-storey, wood framed, 12,217 square foot building that stands on wood cribs and joists (Figure 24 to Figure 30). The building is clad in painted wood shakes and has an arched roof with wood returned eaves. There are flat and shed roofs on the east, south, and north additions. The east elevation features a diamond shaped window, along with multiple-paned rectangular windows with a shaped lintel. One-over-one windows with shaped lintels are on the other elevations. The south elevation features three single-paned, metal entrances, along with a double metal door. Two other double metal doors are located on the west and north elevations. The first storey, below ground level can be accessed through single-leaf metal doors on the north and south elevations. Each level has a wrap around deck with metal painted green railings with diagonal cross balustrade. The first storey deck floor is constructed of concrete while the second storey deck is wood. Two ramps lead to the second storey deck, and two concrete stairs with metal railing to the first storey deck, from the east elevation. There are double garage doors at the water level for boat launches. The interior of the boat club consists of two floors. The upper level has a reception hall, stage area and kitchen. The lower level consists of boat storage, washrooms, and staff offices. The grounds feature views of the Northwest Arm, expansive open space, three tennis courts, lawn bowling facility, a boat launch, and parking (Halifax Regional Municipality 2022). There is also a simple gable structure associated with the lawn bowling club at the northeast corner of the property (see Figure 36)

St. Mary's Boat Club is a vernacular example of recreational architecture, with its form reflecting its function as a recreational and social space. There are some Colonial Revival style elements, such as the returned eaves, diagonal cross balustrade, and shaped lintels. The diagonal cross balustrade is a distinctive design element found on all the Halifax boat clubs, and other structures along the Northwest Arm. The cross balustrade could also be found in Henry Pryor's 'Hillside' house (see Figure 3). The architectural design is quite similar in form to Mic Mac Amateur Aquatic Club (AAC; circa 1923) in terms of the boat launches, diagonal cross balustrade, and curved semi-circular roof with returned eaves (see Figure 22).

Overall, the form strongly reflects its function as a boat club and features large interior public and recreational spaces, water level allocated to marine access, and wrap around second-storey deck that provide extensive views of the Northwest Arm.



Figure 24: East Elevation of 1641 Fairfield Road (30 March 2023)



Figure 25: East and south elevations (30 March 2023)



Figure 26: South elevation (30 March 2023)



Figure 27: Upper deck of the west elevation (30 March 2023)



Figure 28: North elevation (30 March 2023)



Figure 29: Upper and lower deck of south elevation (30 March 2023)



Figure 30: Upper decking (30 March 2023)

Integrity

The structure at the St. Mary's Boat Club property has a fair level of architectural integrity. The decking has been replaced, and the bottom deck is concrete. The windows were originally small square windows on the west and east elevations, which were later changed to tall two-over-two, and again changed to one-over-one with shaped lintels (Figure 31 to Figure 35). The wood railings have been replaced with metal, although the distinguishable diagonal cross balustrade has been largely retained. A single-leaf entrance and three windows on the north elevation have been removed. Two-leaf entrances have been removed and replaced with four-paned windows on the west elevation. Other windows have been removed on the east elevation. There are additions to the north, west and south elevations. The boat launch entrances previously had multiple-pane transoms. The surrounding context has slightly changed as the St. Mary's Villa social club and original club house at the end of Fairfield Road were demolished. Of the 1940s expansion, the tennis courts and lawn bowling remain (Figure 34 and Figure 35). The space for quoits has been replaced with a playground, and the croquet space has been removed. Major renovations took place during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1964, extensive renovations were made to the foundation of the boathouse and the inside was rebuilt (Withrow 1984).



Figure 31: St. Mary's Boat House, undated (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)



Figure 32: Undated photo of Jubilee Boat Club and St. Mary's Boat Club (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)

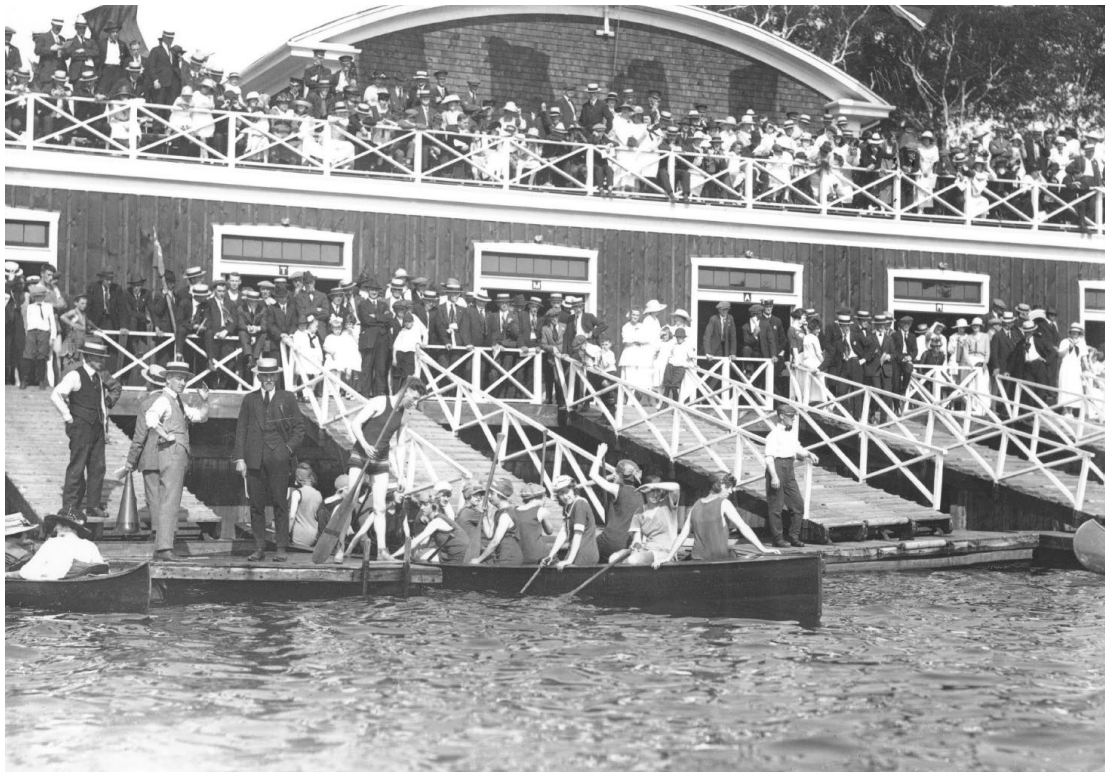


Figure 33: Undated photo of St. Mary's Boat Club (Source: Nova Scotia Archives)

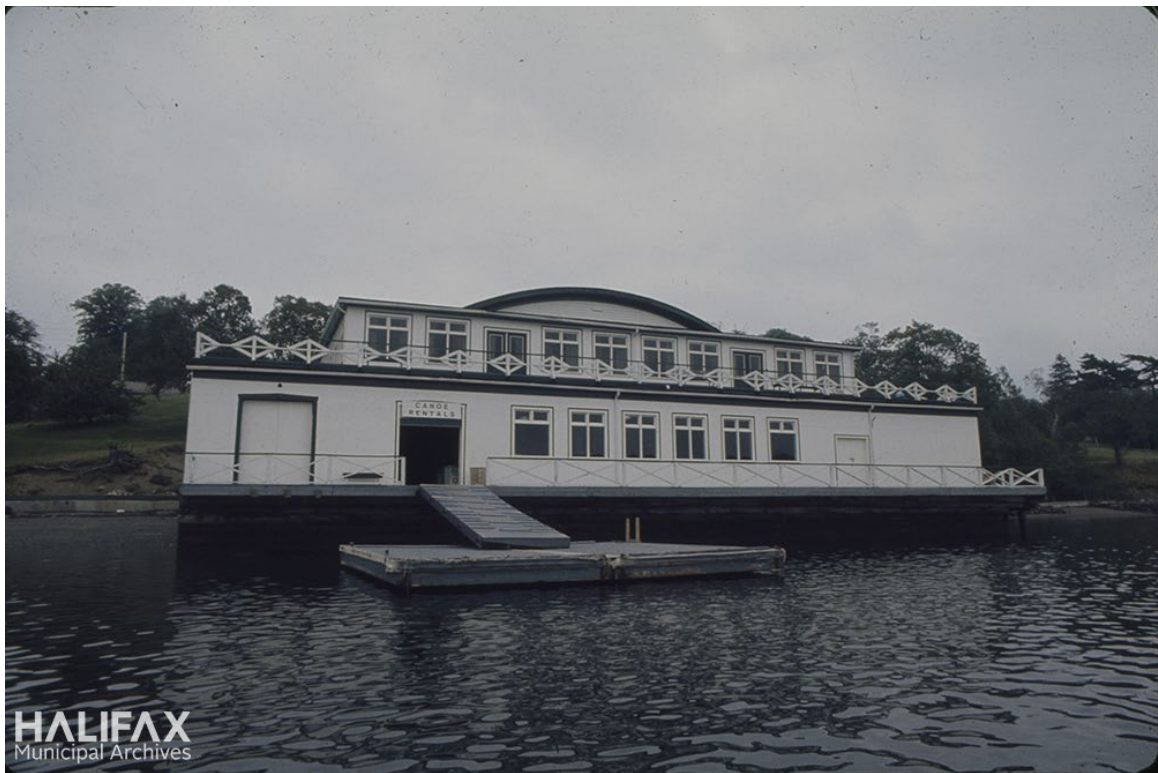


Figure 34: West elevation of St. Mary's Boat Club ca. 1970s (Source: Halifax Municipal Archives)



Figure 35: Upper Deck of St. Mary's Boat Club ca. 1970s (Source: Halifax Municipal Archives)



Figure 36: Lawn bowling club (right) and tennis courts (left), located east of the boat club (10 April 2023)



Figure 37: View of playground and tennis courts from southeast boundary of property (10 April 2023)

Context

Relationship to Surrounding Area

St. Mary's Boat Club has historical, physical, and visual associations with the neighbouring Waegwoltic Club on Coburg Road as another early 20th century boat club. This stretch along the Northwest Arm was historically home to St. Mary's, Waegwoltic, and the former Jubilee Boat Club and Northwest Arm Boat Club. St. Mary's Boat Club is one of the only two remaining boat clubs and provides a physical representation of Halifax's boating and recreation history. The boat club also provides clear views of Dingle Tower and has physical, historical, and visual associations with the Northwest Arm.

Community Value

St. Mary's Boat Club has provided recreational and social opportunities to Haligonians since 1920. The boat club is accessible and provides immeasurable value to families through its seasonal programming. Most people from Halifax have a story related to the boat club, whether it be rowing related, summer camps, or wedding celebrations. This community value is evident in the continued investment in the St. Mary's Boat Club (Halifax Regional Municipality 2022).



Figure 38: Aerial Imagery from 1955 with St. Mary's Boat Club identified in red (Source: Halifax Municipal Archives)



Figure 39: Undated photo of three boat clubs on Northwest Arm (Left to right: Jubilee, St. Mary's and Waegwoltic; Source: Nova Scotia Archives)



Figure 40: View from upper south elevation deck, with Waegwoltic Club to the left and Dingle Tower at centre (30 March 2023)



Figure 41: View from northwest corner of upper deck, showing location of former Jubilee Boat Club to the right (30 March 2023)

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