



# URBAN DESIGN AWARDS

2023 Jury Report

**HALIFAX**

## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The Halifax Regional Municipality is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and traditional lands of the Mi'kmaq people. The municipality acknowledges the Peace & Friendship Treaties signed in this Territory and recognizes that we are all Treaty People.

“**Placemaking** is conventionally defined as a **collaborative approach** to the design, programming and policy of public and semi-public spaces.

It brings **community knowledge** and **vision** to the forefront of public realm design processes, historically going **beyond** the **urbanism status quo** and **hierarchy**.

**Equity-based placemaking** builds on **pluralism** and recognizes **power relations** within communities and the place based **histories of exclusion** and **socio-spatial dynamics** that shape the character of public spaces.

An **equity-based placemaking** approach explicitly acknowledges that **urban design is not neutral**; it either perpetuates or reduces urban inequities.”

- Jay Pitter, *A Call to Courage: An Open Letter to Canadian Urbanists*, June 2020

## FOREWORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Kelly Denty, Executive Director**  
Halifax Regional Municipality  
Planning and Development

### **The Halifax Urban Design Awards**

provide an opportunity to celebrate and to reflect on how far we have come as a region in valuing urban design.

With growth and change there comes a renewed appreciation of our heritage, and how important it is that new buildings not only get built, but also respect and contribute to a high quality public realm that residents can enjoy and be proud of.

Urban design is essential to city-building, and to creating places that are welcoming, safe and inclusive for all people at the street level.

I am pleased to see such a variety of successful projects highlighted by the 2023 Urban Design Awards and congratulations to all our winners.

Thank you to everyone who participated in and organized the 2023 Halifax Urban Design Awards, with a special thank you to our Jurors – Camille Mitchell, Sarah Anderson, Matthew Brown, and Antonio Gómez-Palacio for Chairing the Jury for the 3rd consecutive time. We truly appreciate your commitment and expertise in making the Urban Design Awards a very successful event.

Finally, a sincere thank you to all teams for their submissions this year and to our partner organizations for their support.

- Kelly Denty



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# **HALIFAX URBAN DESIGN AWARDS 2023**

# INTRODUCTION

Urban design plays an important role in enhancing the quality of life for residents of the Halifax Regional Municipality. It helps build better communities by improving the functionality, sustainability and overall appearance of public and private spaces.

Done well, urban design makes a lasting positive impact for residents now and in the future.

The previous awards ceremony, held virtually in 2021, highlighted the strength and resiliency of our region and emphasized how important access to public places is for our collective well-being. Two years later, we are extremely grateful to have the opportunity to bring the community together to celebrate local urban design in a wonderful public space.

The 2023 Halifax Urban Design Awards program aims to recognize and celebrate the individuals, organizations, and design/development firms that have contributed to urban design in the municipality in both public and private spaces. This year an additional emphasis has been added around accessibility, inclusion and housing solutions. Submitted projects or plans must have been completed after January 1, 2018.

As in previous years, 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.

The Halifax Regional Municipality is also pleased to partner with the Nova Scotia Association of Architects (NSAA), the Atlantic Provinces Association of Landscape Architects (APALA) and the Dalhousie University Faculty of Architecture and Planning to recognize the value of urban design. Thank you!

Sincerely,

HRM Planning & Development



**DALHOUSIE**  
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF  
ARCHITECTURE  
AND PLANNING



**HALIFAX**

# THE CEREMONY



Cheryl Copage-Gehue, Indigenous Community Engagement Advisor, commenced the ceremony with a land acknowledgement.



Mayor Mike Savage, also in attendance, spoke about the critical role of good urban design in our region.



Ute Maya-Giambattista, President and Treasurer of the Council for Canadian Urbanism (CanU), provided an overview of the CanU organization and its mission.



Kelly Denty, Executive Director of Planning and Development, was presented with flowers in honour of her retirement.



The municipality would like to thank the Halifax Central Library for hosting the event, Damon Chen for the musical accompaniment and Scanway Catering for providing refreshments.



# THE CEREMONY



The Halifax Regional Municipality hosted the 2023 Urban Design Awards Ceremony on Monday, June 26 2023 at Paul O'Regan Hall in the Halifax Central Library.



The event received an excellent turnout of approximately 90 guests and provided an opportunity for attendees to connect and celebrate together.



The attendees included Jurors, elected officials, project nominees, members of the urban design community, municipal staff and the general public.

# THE CEREMONY



Juror Antonio Gómez-Palacio, Jury Chair, presents the 2023 Jury.



Juror Camille Mitchell presents the *Landscape Architecture and Civic Design Award of Merit*.

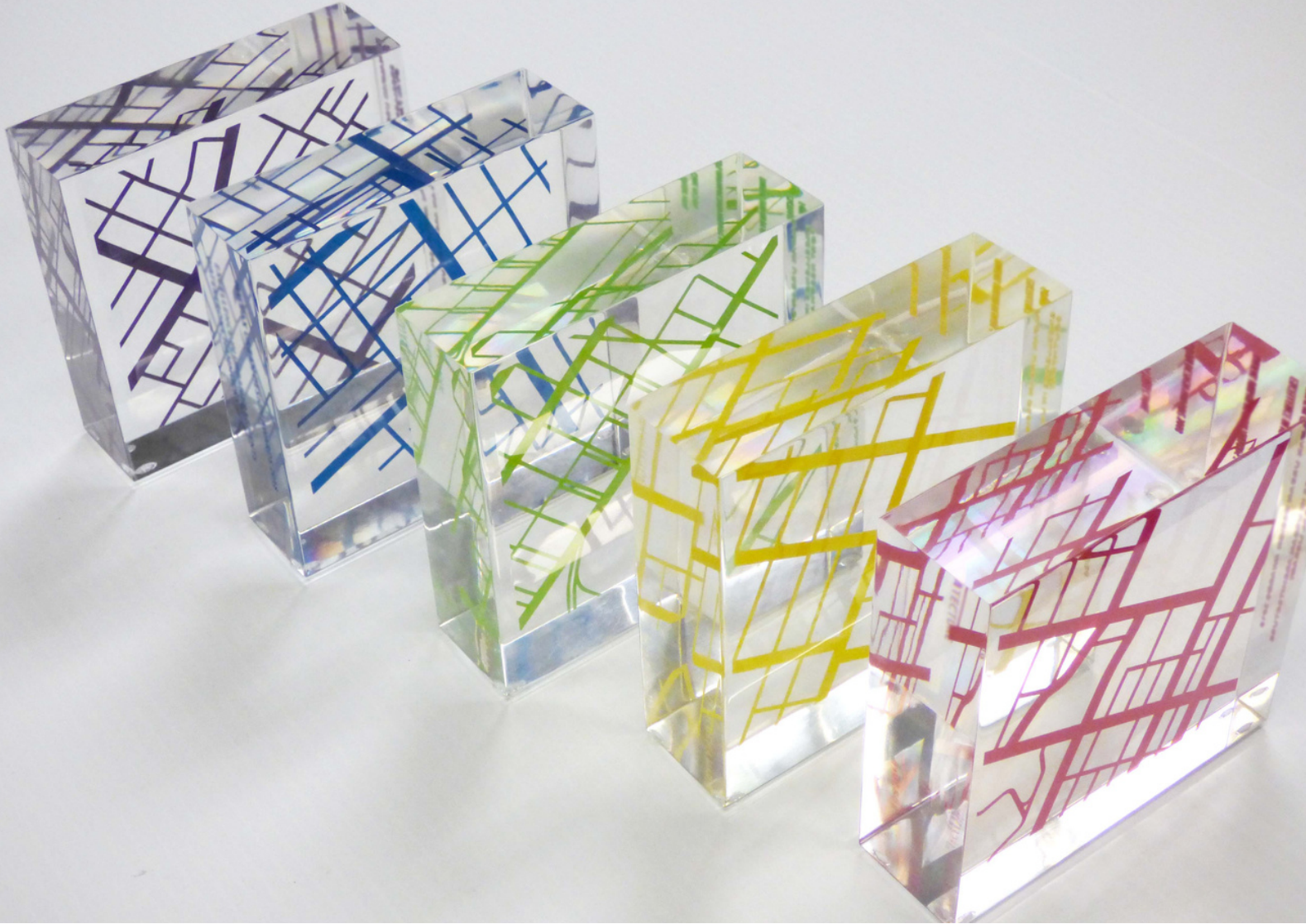


Juror Matthew A.J. Brown presents the *Urban Architecture Award of Excellence*.



Juror Sarah Anderson presents the *Housing Solutions Award of Excellence*.





## TROPHY DESIGN

In 2018, the municipality challenged NSCAD design students to create a trophy that encapsulates the spirit of the Urban Design Awards. Sasan Moradian, a fourth-year interdisciplinary student at the time, created the winning design (pictured above).

The street grid featured in the trophy design reminds us to consider the relationship between buildings, streets and public spaces. The relationship between a person and the street, at the ground level, is what urban design is all about.

Over the years, as more categories have been added to the Awards, the municipality has expanded Sasan's design to reflect the number of diverse projects that are honoured at each ceremony. To honour urban design excellence across the municipality, street grids from outside of the Halifax Peninsula have been added to the collection of trophies.

# JURY PANEL



## JURY STATEMENT 2023

The Jury would like to congratulate the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and its residents for another year of great entries to the Urban Design Awards. With the unprecedented growth of the region, the calibre of entries to the awards program continues to flourish - we were very impressed by the quality of projects submitted.

We have awarded six Awards of Excellence and three Awards of Merit. We were pleased to see a high number of entries and an addition of one new category. This year saw the addition of a Housing Solutions category, and a greater emphasis on landscape architecture in the Civic Design 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. 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.

**- Sarah Anderson, Antonio Gomez-Palacio, Matthew A.J. Brown & Camille Mitchell**



Members of the Jury on a site visit at Peggy's Cove, May 2023

# JURY PANEL

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## ANTONIO GOMEZ-PALACIO

**Halifax Urban Design Awards Jury Chair**

**Arq. MES, RPP, MCIP, MRAIC**

**Partner and Chair, DIALOG – Toronto, ON**

Antonio's mission is to leverage the collective creativity and innovation within DIALOG to continue delivering design solutions to the many challenges we face globally – from climate change and equity to social wellbeing. Antonio's career has been built at the intersection of design disciplines – with studios in Toronto as well as across Canada in Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver, and in San Francisco.

His city-building experience has led him to work across many Ontario municipalities, as well as beyond. He is internationally recognized for creating transformational and vibrant urban spaces that support their social, economic, and environmental setting. He is a sought-after speaker, inspiring public and private sector leaders, to leverage the power of cities and communities towards achieving meaningful impact.



## CAMILLE MITCHELL

**OAA, MRAIC**

**Architect, SvN Architects and Planners - Toronto, ON**

Camille is an Architect that brings extensive experience on award-winning projects, and leverages this work to cement her reputation as a powerful advocate for under-represented groups to be involved with the design of their built environments.

Camille is a founding member of the independent organizations Building Equality in Architecture Toronto and Black Architects + Interior Designer Association. Their programs are dedicated to supporting mentorship, networking and leadership opportunities for women and visible minorities within the architecture profession. She was also selected to join the Urban Land Institute's Women in Leadership Initiative Championship Team.

# JURY PANEL

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## MATTHEW A.J. BROWN

**CSLA, OALA, APALA**

**Co-Founder of Brackish Design Studio – Saint John, NB**

Professionally, Matthew spent the first seven years of his practice in Boston before returning to Atlantic Canada, where he co-founded Brackish in 2019. Matthew has managed a variety of high-profile projects around New England and Atlantic Canada that include large institutional master plans, campus landscapes, urban parks, waterfronts, and private residential landscapes.

In addition to practice, Matthew has taught a variety of landscape studios at both Northeastern University and the University of Toronto, and is currently an Adjunct Scholar at Dalhousie University. His connection to coastal environments is evident through both practice and academia, with a focus on landscape architecture's vital role in resilience, renewal, and regeneration.



## SARAH ANDERSON

**MCIP, RPP**

**Manager of Development Planning – Moncton, NB**

Sarah's breadth of experiences ranges from planning and place-making in a rural municipal context, conservation planning and regional policy analysis at the provincial level, and development planning in a rapidly urbanizing city.

Sarah's current position with the City of Moncton focuses on ensuring that decisions on new growth and development respect the priorities of environmental sustainability, a safe and vibrant public realm, meeting the housing need, and maintaining community integrity. Sarah is a member of the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), was a panelist for the CIP national review of core competencies, and she sits as a juror for the Atlantic Planners Institute Planning Excellence Awards.



# **SUBMISSIONS**



# SUBMISSION CRITERIA

Submissions were received for eight award categories. Projects from all municipal communities were eligible for awards, whether they were located in the Regional Centre or a small rural community.

Each category had different eligibility requirements and individual criteria for award selection, but all projects were required to have been completed after January 1, 2018.

In addition to being evaluated based on each category's individual criteria, all successful nominees were required to achieve the following Urban Design Goals:

- design that is human scaled
- design that reflects community context
- design that inspires civic awareness and participation; and
- design that intentionally addresses accessibility, diversity or inclusion

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.

For a complete list of submissions, please visit the [Urban Design Awards 2023](#) webpage.



# SUBMISSION CATEGORIES



## 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 in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Examples include, but are not limited to: street improvement plans, public art, commemorative or interpretive installations, and environmental initiatives.



## Heritage Adaptive Re-use Projects

This category is for heritage adaptive re-use projects 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 located within the Halifax Regional Municipality.



## Heritage Restoration Projects

This category is for heritage restoration projects in which 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 located within the Halifax Regional Municipality.



## Housing Solutions

This category is for any community builder who has built or has advanced plans for a project that delivers housing in a creative way. Priority is given to infill projects or plans that prioritize affordability and groups that face greater housing challenges. Examples include but are not limited to: secondary and backyard suites, shared housing, housing plans, supportive housing projects, cluster housing and other low-rise and “missing middle” housing forms.

# SUBMISSION CATEGORIES



## **Landscape Architecture and 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 and that make a positive contribution to environmental and climate change goals of the municipality.



## **Student Projects**

The category includes urban design projects from individual students or groups of students enrolled in a University located within the Halifax Regional Municipality. Projects must address local context.



## **Urban Architecture**

This category is for a building (or group of buildings) of high architectural standards which achieves urban design excellence through its relationship with its immediate surroundings because of its site, massing, and pedestrian amenities or green building design. The building will also contribute to defining a special relationship with the neighbouring urban fabric.



## **Urban Design Plans**

This category is for a plan or study of a significant area within the Halifax Regional Municipality that provides a development or redevelopment strategy for inspired urban transformation in the mid-to-long-term.



## **Urban Elements**

This category is for single, small-scale pieces of a building or landscape that contribute significantly to the quality of the public realm in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Projects can be of a temporary (but not ephemeral) or permanent nature.



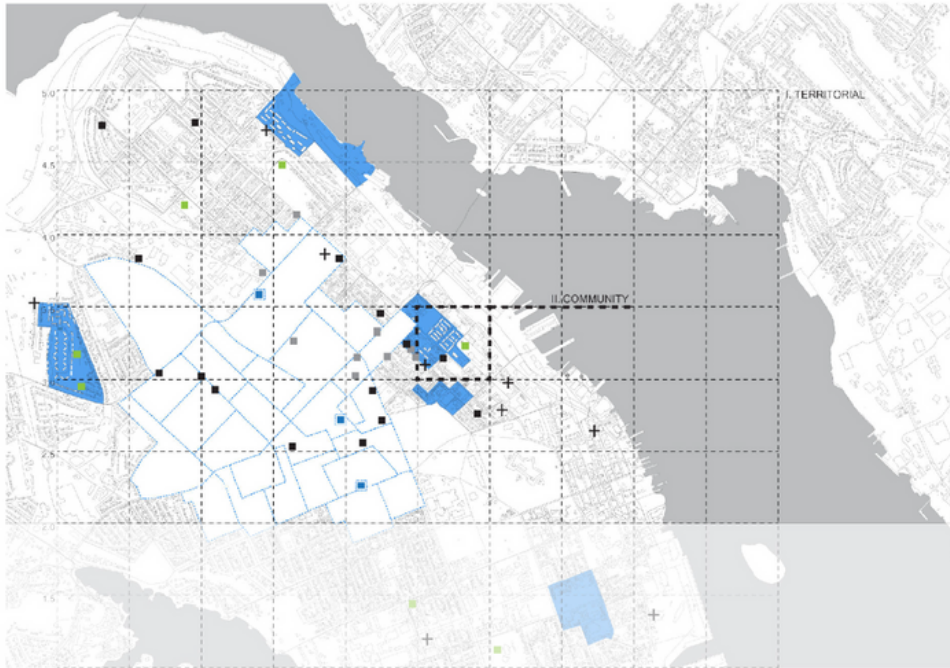
# 2023 AWARD WINNERS



# FOOD

## COMMUNITY SCALE

Gottingen Street is a commercial strip that intersects with many homes for low-income residents where the Uniacke Square community has been living here for decades. With the challenge of high retail foods on Gottingen Street, the residents in a low-income neighborhood experience a food desert to get fresh local products. Today, the commercial strip continued to grow with a new intensification development to bring more young residents to the area and no betterment for the community to voices.



### LEGEND

- LOW-INCOME POPULATION AREAS
- PUBLIC HOUSINGS
- COMMUNITY GARDENS
- GROCERY STORES
- FOOD BANKS
- CONVENIENCE STORES
- ETHNIC AND SPECIALTY STORES
- SERVICE AREA FOR GROCERY STORES

Extract from *Food Activism*  
(Nguyen Ha, 2023)

## EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT PROJECTS

### FOOD ACTIVISM: Fighting for Affordable Living and Food Justice

This project explores an important topic that needs to be addressed in the design of cities and community facilities.

Nguyen Ha articulates and highlights specific aspects that are important to universal human integrity: access to food, human connections, and social interactions.

The depth of research and analysis conducted for this architectural study effectively informs the design approach.

The design exploration and visual language used throughout the project is clear and cohesive.

#### Project Lead

Tai Nguyen Ha  
Dalhousie University  
School of Architecture

#### Completed In

2023



Photo credit: Myles Burry

## AWARD OF EXCELLENCE IN URBAN ELEMENTS HALIFAX EXPLOSION MARKERS

These urban art structures mark the 100th anniversary of the Halifax Explosion, a difficult and tragic event that forever changed the city's form. However, the Halifax Explosion Markers offer a positive opportunity for people to interact with a devastating moment in Halifax's history. These approachable structures serve to inform about the thousands of lives lost in the explosion, yet also "speak to the resiliency of the people of Halifax" (from the RHAD *Project Summary*).

The jury commended this project on its dynamic use of materials and structural elements, which are perceived differently when viewing the sculptures from various positions in the landscape. The placement of the art pieces create a city-wide narrative that is expressed through their integration in various natural and urban contexts. The Markers invite creative interpretation and allow viewers to, quite literally, reflect on their place within Halifax's past and future.

### Project Team

**Lead Firm:** RHAD Architects

**Associate Firm:** Dillon Consulting

### Owner

Halifax Regional Municipality

### General Contractor

MetalTech -  
Dominique Doucet-Lavigne

### Others

Campbell Comeau Engineering

### Recognized Individuals

Rayleen Hill (Architect)  
Megan Gainer (Architect)  
Geln Rockett (Engineer)  
Michel Comeau (Engineer)  
David Organ (Specifications)  
Marc Belanger + Luc Stover (Specialist Consultants)

### Completed In

May 2018





Photo Credit: Julian Parkinson & Omar Gandhi Architects

## EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & INITIATIVES

# REIMAGINING GOTTINGEN STREET SEATING

This project animates the Gottingen streetscape through a bespoke and tailored approach. The wooden installations engage and invite people to use the streetscape in various ways: the seating provides diverse conditions for diverse uses by diverse users.

With that being said, the structures remain sensitive to their context and the unique streetscape conditions. The project was anchored in community consultation and serves to tell neighbourhood stories.

Reimagining Gottingen Street generates awareness about different designers and invites dialogue between designers and the local community.

### Project Team

#### Lead Firms:

OSO Planning + Design  
FBM Architecture  
Omar Gandhi Architect  
Peter Henry Architect

### Owner

North End Business Association

### Associates

Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre  
Radstorm/Inkstorm  
Phoenix  
Bus Stop Theatre

### Other

Build Nova Scotia

### Completed In

December 2022





Photo Credit: David Hendsbee

# AWARD OF MERIT FOR HERITAGE ADAPTIVE RE-USE KINNEY PLACE

The jury was impressed by the success of this project's restorations. The building, which once served as the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children, maintains the integrity of its century old structure. Kinney Place now functions as a significant community hub that recognizes the site's history and celebrates African Nova Scotian culture.

Kinney Place plays an important community building role by bringing people together and cultivating empowerment. Local social support systems are strengthened through the integration of community gardens and programs such as the Intergenerational Centre and spaces for Black owned businesses in the building.

This project is a significant catalyst to sustain not just a past, but a current and future sense of identity for the African Nova Scotian community.

Project Team
<b>Lead Firm:</b> T.A Scott Architecture + Design
<b>Associate Firm:</b> CBCL Limited
Owner
DORA Construction
General Contractor
Akoma Holdings Incorporated
Other
Kathleen Mitchell - Board President
Recognized Individual
Veronica Marsman
Completed In
October 2022



Photo Credit: Harrison Jardine

## EXCELLENCE IN URBAN ARCHITECTURE

### THE GEORGE

This building was thoughtfully designed to respect and reflect the surrounding built fabric of three very different sides and was recognized for its interaction with the street level, which fosters a neighbourly feel amongst the ground related units. The George's landscape allows for an integration of open spaces at different levels and permeable elevations on each side of the building, including active commercial spaces and ground-oriented units.

The stepped height of this mixed-use, high density development provides multiple amenity spaces for tenants and incorporates green features through its ground level landscape and rooftop gardens.

The building's massing and articulation facilitate the transition between low and high density and prevent it from overwhelming the space. The articulation and detailing combine to create a thoughtful, well-integrated building that distinguishes the development from others.

Albeit tall and large, the structure acknowledges and respects the surrounding neighbourhood and built form. The George demonstrates a sensitive relationship to its community context.

#### Project Team

##### Lead Firm:

Dexel Architecture Ltd.

##### Associate Firm:

Fathom Architecture Ltd.

#### Owner

Lawen Group

#### General Contractor

Dexel Developments

#### Others

Structural: Campbell Comeau

Mechanical: MCW Maricor

Electrical: MCW Maricor

Civil Engineer: CBCL

#### Completed In

December 2021





Photo credit: Harrison Jardine

## AWARD OF MERIT FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND CIVIC DESIGN QUEEN'S MARQUE

This project is recognized by the jury for its positive framing of public space at the waterfront. The open square and 'rise again' plaza enable groups of various sizes to congregate, setting the stage for public life and active programming.

The integration of public art and interactive infrastructure into the design fosters an interesting dynamic between the space and its visitors.

The Queen's Landing piece allows for the continuation of public waterfront access and creates a unique opportunity for people to interact with the Halifax Harbour, but the design could go further in making it accessible for people of all ages and abilities.

### Project Team

**Lead Firm:** Fathom Studio

**Associate Firm:**  
MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple  
Architects

### Owner

Armour Group Limited

### General Contractor

Armour Group Limited in joint  
venture with Bird Construction

### Other

FBM (Prime Consultant)

### Completed In

February 2023



Photo credit: Maxime Brouillet

## EXCELLENCE IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND CIVIC DESIGN PEGGY'S COVE VIEWING DECK

The contemporary design complements the unique coastal views and iconic heritage lighthouse in a way that harmonizes with the location's natural and cultural heritage.

The structure is cohesive and sensitive to the surrounding context and its materiality is congruent with the natural setting. The jury appreciated elements of the detailing of the design and how the curved lines echo the motion of the waves.

The viewing deck allows views and access up to the edge in a manner that is inclusive and not overpowering to the landscape. It is a great example of barrier free accessibility for all users.

### Project Team

#### Lead Firm:

Omar Gandhi Architects

#### Owner

Build Nova Scotia

#### General Contractor

Trim Landscaping

#### Recognized Individuals

Community of Peggy's Cove  
ACOA

Tourism Nova Scotia  
NS Department of Public Works  
Harbourside Engineering  
EDM Planning

#### Completed In

October 2021





Photo credit: Sprout Dwellings

## AWARD OF MERIT FOR HOUSING SOLUTIONS SPROUT DWELLINGS

This modular and repeatable design system of small units allows for versatility of deployment; Sprout structures can be fashioned as Accessory Dwelling Units (backyard suites), small primary dwellings or cottages. These modular units expand the number of options available to residents seeking multi-generational and accessible living spaces.

The jury commends the attention to detail involved in the construction of Sprout Dwellings. The contemporary design of the units recognizes the local vernacular, allowing the structures to smoothly blend with the surrounding urban landscape.

Based on their work so far, it is evident that Sprout prioritizes incorporating both sustainability and affordability in their designs. The jury agrees that this model offers a creative solution for increasing gentle density in the municipality.

### Project Team

**Lead Firm:** Sprout Dwellings Inc.

### General Contractor

Sprout Dwellings Inc.

### Owners

Erin Crosby, Oliver Nemeskeri,  
Sean Kirkwood

### Recognized Individuals

Patrick Spelliscy, Intern Architect  
Krysia Gorgolewska, Interior Designer  
Fernando Diaz Cortes, Project Manager  
Troy Hunter, Lead Carpenter  
Aiden Morneau-MacLeod, Carpenter  
Wes Geisler, Carpenter  
Jeremy Hatcher, Carpenter  
Brandon Hendrix, Carpenter

### Completed In

March 2022-February 2023





Photo Credit: Harrison Jardine & Fathom Studio

# AWARD OF EXCELLENCE FOR HOUSING SOLUTIONS

## DIAMOND BAILEY HEALING CENTRE

The Diamond Bailey Healing Centre addresses the needs of Indigenous and vulnerable members of the community by providing culturally sensitive emergency transitional housing and harm reduction services. The organization's goal of cultivating a space that is safe, welcoming and inclusive for all is reflected in the Indigenous design features and principles that are woven into the architecture.

The jury pointed out the architects' creative attention to detail and noted the consideration of aging qualities of materials. This structure can be considered a contemporary interpretation of Indigenous heritage, language and materiality of the community that it aims to heal and support.

The scale and built form of the Diamond Bailey Healing Centre harmonize with the neighbourhood context and surrounding heritage streetscape. Despite its location on a corner lot, the building is sensitive to both street frontages. The structure's fluid exterior and absence of hard edges enhances its warm and welcoming character.

Project Team
Lead Firm: Fathom Studio
Owner
Mi'Kmaw Native Friendship Centre
General Contractor
Lindsay Construction Structural: Sani Engineering Mechanical & Electrical: Smith & Anderson Civil: DesignPoint Development Manager: East Port Properties
Recognized Individuals
Chris Crawford – Partner & Director of Architecture & Interiors Jessica Standford – Associate Project Architect Ben Cottrill – Architectural Designer Ardena Paul – Architectural Engineering Technician Devin Segal – Partner, Director of Landscape Architecture Sujana Devabhaktuni – Landscape Architectural Intern
Completed In
April 2023

# CONCLUSION



# OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

The Jury would like to congratulate everyone that submitted projects to this year's Urban Design Awards. It is worth celebrating the large number of diverse individuals, including community members, that came together to make each of these projects happen.

Halifax Regional Municipality is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada. This means that promoting high quality urban design that is sensitive to context and environment is more important than ever.

Many of this year's project submissions provided innovative solutions to the challenges faced by communities in the municipality. The Jury was impressed with designs that created visual connections to the surrounding landscape and harmonized with their environmental and social context.

In addition, many of the submissions embraced matters related to equity, accessibility, and diversity. The Jury was especially inspired by the backstories and tenacity of community led projects.

The number and quality of submissions is a testament to the depth and breadth of talented urban designers working in the HRM, which includes collaboration with designers from across Canada and beyond. The quality of these submissions suggests that the municipality is well positioned to foster more innovative urban design projects in the future.



## SPONSORS

The Halifax Regional Municipality would like to thank the **Dalhousie Faculty of Architecture and Planning**, the **Atlantic Provinces Association of Landscape Architects (APALA)**, and the **Nova Scotia Association of Architects** for their generous support of this event.



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apala

NOVA  
SCOTIA

ASSOCIATION OF  
ARCHITECTS

