

**Public Consultation Meeting #3**  
**Presentation Questions and Answers**  
**August 25, 2010**

At the August 25<sup>th</sup> Central Library public meeting we asked you for your questions for the architects. The following are your questions and the architects' answers.

<p>1. What are you most excited about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is the most significant public building to be built in Halifax in a generation and we're thrilled to be part of it.</li></ul>
<p>2. How/where are the Maritime components in this building?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Treatment of the facade and finishes will relate to the context of Halifax. We're discussing what materials will relate to the Maritimes such as the possible use of wood in the interior. The potential creation of gardens on the roof top references the gardens of Bellevue House built on this site in 1800 by Prince Edward.</li></ul>
<p>3. If the design intends to reflect "Halifax's soul" (as recently quoted in a newspaper), we advise you to clearly define for us what you see as "Halifax's soul?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The building will reflect Maritime hospitality of warm, friendly and welcoming with a performance space and openness at street level and expressions of the art, music and culture of the area both inside and out.</li></ul>

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| <p>4.<br/>5.<br/>7.<br/>8.<br/>9.</p> | <p>Sustainability over time?<br/>How will the building's sustainability features evolve over the years - 20 to 50 years ahead?<br/>Will it age gracefully?<br/>In 50 years will this building be dated and age gracefully - both in style and materials used?<br/>Timeless and able to mature gracefully?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All elements that contribute to the sustainability of the building are being measured including cost, durability and sound design principles to create a well balanced entity. The space will be organized for maximum use and the flexibility to allow change over time. It will be socially sustainable, that is, socially relevant today and tomorrow and economically sustainable, therefore not costly to be able to incorporate future trends and materials.</li> </ul> |
| <p>6.</p>                             | <p>How will the library age over its lifetime without changing use patterns of libraries?<br/>Aging populations    No paper goods    Online downloads<br/>What is the lifetime? What is the use after its lifetime?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The interior design for library functionality is also in progress. Furniture and equipment design and library collection shelving will seek to incorporate flexibility to allow integration of future service trends.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>10.</p>                            | <p>How will the building explicitly communicate its "sustainability?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The building itself will communicate its sustainability explicit in such elements as greening roofs, glazed facades to encourage openness, democracy and therefore social sustainability, open spaces, quality of materials, natural light and planting within the building. A signage program may also be used to highlight these features.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>11.</p>                            | <p>Where are the materials sourced? Can we use recycled, local, reused materials?<br/>Could these give dimension, narrative, warmth and character to the space?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the plan to use local, regional and recycled materials wherever possible. However, there are supply and budget issues that may impact this; the intention is to use local distributors for regional and Canadian materials.</li> </ul>  |

12. General Design

13. The outside space — usable, communal, sunny, impact of wind, multiple uses from Spring Garden level — how to accommodate all of this through design?

14. The building will clearly attract people in. How will it radiate its civic function and significance out into the city? How does this element mesh with the existing physical, social and cultural “ecosystem?”

- The exterior of the building is as important as the interior. Consideration will be given to the climate, exposure, wind, light, as well as pedestrian traffic patterns, flow and movement in the area to try to accommodate the wishes of the diverse users of these spaces. The design will connect the building’s outside with the inside to utilize the opportunities that the space offers for multiple uses. Keeping green in front with new landscaping will link to the front of the School of Architecture grounds creating a civic public space for the city.

15. Are we taking enough risk with the exterior?

- We are attempting to be bold within the context of Halifax, the budget, site limitations and working within planning guidelines which require view planes, set backs and step backs. The facade is not fully developed as the design is evolving but it is our intention to create a building that is bold enough to reflect and celebrate its public open and democratic nature.

16. Why does the design need to contrast so much with classical design of Halifax landmarks?

- The building’s goal is to reflect society as it is now — a replica of the past doesn’t reflect diversity. It needs to be open to the future. Classical buildings relate more to an elite — the building design will not be in contrast to the past but respecting of it, not overpowering in scale but creating a dialogue with older buildings around it. This is one of the key elements in generating the currently proposed external form of the building.

17. Why is it not a “classical” design?

- There is a constant evolution in architecture to reflect the now and the future. The building won't be built in contrast to but will adapt to and reflect the classical without overpowering other buildings. The new central library for Halifax should not be a pastiche of a classical building but reflect where Halifax is now and where it is going in the future.

18. Is the intention that the main entrance will be on Spring Garden? Might an entrance on Queen be better given light/sun conditions are better on this side?

- Service access points are dependent on security issues. While the main entrance is expected to be on Spring Garden, there will be at least two entrances.

19. Is there a way to combine a softer shape with the angularity?

20. Can we incorporate some curves within the straight line building concept?

- In the facades the shifting of slabs and levels make the building less formal and rigid. It is the intention that softness can come through the materials used and the interiors.

21. How will the scale be realized with the surrounding context?

22. Can you bring the organic topology back? We miss it!

- The design of the building will stay absolutely within the planning guidelines set out by HRM for any new permitted development. It will relate at the west to new buildings at the same height; on the lower east side it will relate to the School of Architecture and will drop to a smaller scale on the south Schmittville side. The entrances will relate to the human scale and the movement of people around and through the building.

23. Is the top layer too heavy looking? Is it all glass (facade)?

- Modifications are being made and the top level has been reduced based on feedback at public consultations. The material is not yet determined but it will not be all glass. As part of the sustainable design of the building it is unlikely that all the façade could be glass, in order to achieve the required levels of insulation within the given budget for the building.

24. What is the benefit of overhanging levels? Great ground level with wintertime interior green space could be a better use?

- The two are not mutually exclusive. We have utilized the full footprint that is available at ground level. The cantilevers at lower levels provide shelter and the opportunity to expand space at other levels. The higher level cantilevers are intended to react to the library's surrounding urban context and create a landmark befitting this new public building within the immediate city context and beyond.

25. Theme. How will this be innovative — materials, technology, sourcing of materials, heating, energy, art and community space while also engaging with its context and community?

- Uniqueness can come from the facade as it relates to sustainability and context around it — public art and community space. It will be socially responsive to the community integrating aspects heard during the community engagement sessions into both the exterior and interior design and the layout.

26. Having done similar buildings in the past, what construction issues have you faced with these types of cantilevered designs?

- The size of the cantilever depends on steel used efficiently to create a double height structure. The challenge is in the need for the steel to be fire rated. The size of the cantilever is likely to be refined and perhaps reduced in order to respond to the available budget. The challenge is to ensure we can achieve the dynamic external form, without compromising the budget to allow good quality internal spaces.

27. Approaches. How many and what kind and on what levels of concern about "difficult" terracing?

- Desire for outdoor space was clearly heard from the public. We're trying to give every user group a space and bring the outdoors in. Different terraces may have different functions as we are aware of challenges with terraces. We are still exploring this, looking at functionality and cost in relation to the building concept. We are investigating the challenges of allowing public access onto the terraces, as well as the positives of simply creating visual green roof space that is visible from within the library at higher levels, yet non-accessible to the public.

28.	Does the exterior reflect the dynamic interior? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The building will be visually appealing. Ground level activity will relate both the interior and exterior. Both have different heights, widths and lengths emphasizing the relationships between the exterior and interior.</li></ul>
29.	Weather/climate. Will a wind study be done? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yes, this will be part of the process.</li></ul>
30.	Climate/weather, etc. What about snow on the flat roof and icicles on the overhang? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are many ways to address this issue. A special roof edge design will keep icicles from forming.</li></ul>
31.	Our Maritime winters are wet and slushy - have you thought about the issue with a lot of slush/water collecting on a variety of flat roof surfaces? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actually there is a slightly pitched roof under the green which will facilitate the drainage. There will also be a requirement to deal with the issues of water and slush being brought into the building from foot traffic at first floor during the winter months, and this is something that will be incorporated into the detail design of the building.</li></ul>
32.	How is Halifax's harsh weather going to affect the use of the public plaza spaces? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The overhang will provide protective spaces from the weather.</li></ul>
33.	Why not have a greenhouse that can be used year round? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The cost of operation and maintenance is an issue. An atrium with greenery will serve this function.</li></ul>

34.	<p>How will architects deal with climate control within building? Heating/cooling. Weather aspects. Humidity. Utilization of rain water/snow collected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are discussing sustainable heating and cooling systems and proposing water collection of roof water. Different facades will be treated differently to suit their orientation.</li> </ul>
35.	<p>Can the building cladding capture solar energy and still be beautiful and interesting?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes it can although it is not economically feasible. There is potential use for passive solar.</li> </ul>
36.	<p>Are the overhangs on the north side of the building conducive to attracting people to gather given the amount of shade that occurs here no matter what time of year or day?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new location is a high traffic area. The overhang does not change the amount of shadow on the front of the building. At certain times, light does penetrate and it does provide a sheltered space.</li> </ul>
37.	<p>What is the strategy for the landscaping to make the outdoors and indoors usable for the public and connect the outdoor environment to the indoors? ie. seating areas, pathways, planting and daylight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A landscape plan is to be developed with a combination of grass and hard surfaces.</li> </ul>
38.	<p>Will the below ground space be usable for library use or just parking? Seems like constraints on height can be addressed by building down.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It will be used for parking and physical plants. It is more expensive to build down and does not make for attractive spaces.</li> </ul>
39.	<p>How can the presented library scheme be more comfortable, organic and green?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The facade development is an important part of this; will be looking at ways to incorporate as much sustainability elements as the program permits.</li> </ul>

40.	<p>How will the various spaces be balanced – community spaces for whom? – open space and small intimate space – interior decoration that appeals to a range of users – what other options are there for interiors?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The spaces will be balanced for all and will incorporate diverse needs. The consultation process is providing insight as to how to ensure the spaces reflect needs.</li> </ul>
41.	<p>How do internal functions of the library drive the design? When is that addressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is being worked on simultaneously and will be addressed at the next public consultation meeting.</li> </ul>
42.	<p>Will the interior space be flexible so it can be changed/modified over time? Is it “flexible” (function)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes. This is a big goal; the space will have multiple functions with the ability to address changing needs and trends.</li> </ul>
43.	<p>Acoustics. How do we balance interpersonal communication as well as contemplative quiet space?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial relationships will be addressed. Materials on floor, walls and ceiling will give different degrees of acoustic damping and allow quiet and active spaces.</li> </ul>
44.	<p>How will comfort, convenience come together and allow for ease of movement/transition through the space?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will be an intuitive design for easy and clearly visible means of moving between floors and spaces with escalators, elevators and attention paid to disabled accommodation.</li> </ul>
45.	<p>How will spaces be divided e.g. where is the auditorium? the children’s space? the staff rooms? How much space will be allotted to these areas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will be addressed at the next meeting. We’re working on detailed floor plans to be revealed at the next public consultation meeting on Sept. 30.</li> </ul>



46. Retail versus public space?
47. How does the design guarantee truly public space while it is contained within so much retail?
- The Library will be a public oasis similar to the Halifax Public Gardens balancing the activity on the street. Retail spaces in the Library are under discussion.
48. How does the design promote the creation of a vibrant retailing environment along Queen St. (to promote the financial sustainability of this street)?
- The building will draw people downtown and facilitate flow to Queen St.
49. Is there a “bigger” plan for the whole Queen St. block?
51. What’s in store south of the site between Spring Garden and Morris?
- The [Spring Garden Road/Queen Street Area Joint Public Lands Plan](#) describes the development plans for the area. (Link to this doc)  
[www.halifax.ca/capitaldistrict/documents/SGQFinalReportNovember2006.pdf](http://www.halifax.ca/capitaldistrict/documents/SGQFinalReportNovember2006.pdf)
50. The Spring Garden/Queen urban design study recommended a strong pedestrian environment on Queen St. How does this design help accomplish this?
- The design of the new Central Library will facilitate this movement and activity on Queen St. and the surrounding areas.
52. What effort has been made to respond to the existing surroundings both built form and surrounding activity? The area is very dependant on street activity. Will this building contribute?
53. How does the building “fit” with the area? Will it allow growth or stifle it? Will it make the area livable?
- The building will respect and complement existing buildings as well as the development plans discussed in the [Spring Garden Road/Queen Street Area Joint Public Lands Plan](#). It will encourage growth and will be a great community resource, very vibrant inside and out, which makes the area livable.

54. What effort is being made to actually reflect (in the glass walls) to adjacent built architecture thus making an effort to integrate with the built form around it?

- The building design will be respecting of surrounding developments in height, design and materials.

55. What are the restrictions on what can be built on the lot behind the library? Concerns about light.

- There should be no light issue due to the plaza and alignment with Clyde St. and the new development.

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