Dalhousie University
LeMarchant Mixed-use Building Community Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 21
Mona Campbell Building, Rm. 1107

1. Welcome and introductions - Alex Walker

2. Overview of the construction schedule - Michael Eakin
Mike provided an update and overview on the project and where it’s headed. The project is just about ready to go to tender, it will be tendered in sequence (rather than as a package), just getting ready to award the demolition tender. Getting ready to erect a partial fence around the four university-owned homes that are on the future site of the LeMarchant St. Mixed-Use Facility. Below is a tentative schedule:

November:
- Present Status: Design Development and Working Drawings
- Start Setting up Site Office and Demolition Fencing
- Start Abatement and Demolition of Houses

December:
- Continue with Working Drawings
- Start Tendering for Trade Packages
- Continue Abatement and Demolition of Houses
- Revisions to Arena Exiting and Set Up main Construction Fencing

January 2012:
- Continue Abatement and Demolition of Houses
- Site Work, Excavation and Rock Removal

February - December, 2012:
- Exterior finishing
- Building envelope

January 2013-August 2013
- Interior Finishes
- Landscaping
- Furniture and Equipment
- Construction Complete in August 2013

September 2013
- Open for Students

3. Updated architectural design - Peter Connell
Peter Connell from DSRA provided an overview on the building and the rationale behind the colour glass selections. New sketches were presented, resulting from the feedback
at the August 30 meeting with the community. The colour schemes presented are not final and Dalhousie has requested another treatment.

Peter also showed the additional windows (increasing the light within the building) and the change in the top two levels (which now has a step). Windows will be operable to allow for fresh air. The building is targeting LEED gold (the bar keeps increasing, so more points are now required to attain this level).

A neighbour was concerned about the elevated noise resulting from the windows (and also from the third residence on South Street) being operable and is worried about undue risks to the community from increased noise. Peter indicated that the windows are meant to open 3 inches just to allow for air flow and the design can control how wide the windows open. Alex Walker indicated that the building is still in design phase and there are several considerations including student safety that will be taken into account when selecting windows.

How will families and public will access the arena and the building? Peter indicated that the residence portion of the building is a controlled access and illustrated the access points (residence and public) to the building. There are public entrances on both South and LeMarchant Streets to the galleria. The main entrance to the residence portion of the building is on LeMarchant Street, roughly across from the Risley Street entrance.

There will be a reduction in parking but metered parking will be added to the Risley Hall parking lot. Another concern related to the curb appeal on the perimeter to the campus - neighbours would like something other than a berm. Perhaps greenery/screens, etc. that would address noise pollution and to protect the view onto South Street. The landscape plan hasn’t been done yet, and we will do another meeting with neighbours.

Was the building designed to stand apart of blend into the existing campus. The form is different than other buildings but the colouring are connected to the other buildings on campus. The directive was that the outlying buildings are more modern than the historical stone-clad buildings on the upper part of campus.

Is there a possibility to create a smoking area? Right now the students are going into the neighbourhoods and staff are on LeMarchant outside Risley Hall.

4. Overview of the logistics - Andrew Merrick

Andrew presented a sketch with the location of the trailers. He also presented a drawing of where the temporary modular fence will be located. The main entrance on LeMarchant to the arena will be unaffected by this phase, however the second exit (between the houses) will be blocked. The second fence will go up in mid-December and will take the sidewalk and part of the street on LeMarchant. The sidewalk on South Street will be unaffected. The new drop-off to the arena will be off Alumni Crescent, exiting to South Street.
The construction site will be accessible from LeMarchant Street and also from South Street (tied into Alumni crescent). South Street is a truck route.

Which way will all the truck traffic go? Andrew still has to meet with HRM traffic to discuss the traffic patterns.

One neighbour raised concerns about increased vehicular traffic exiting off Alumni Crescent - worried about the safety of students crossing South Street, headed to Dalplex. Is there a way to increase the lighting/signage of the crosswalk?

5. Q&As/Discussions

Will we be doing inspections pre-blasting and post construction inspections for damage — heard this was done for the Ocean’s Excellence Centre (OEC). How much rock is there? How long will the rock breaking take? We have done studies, looks like the rock is fairly close to the surface, three to four feet. Not planning on using blasting but will rather employ rock breaking.

Concern about the noise during the OEC. Found that the drilling would start at 6:30 a.m., this was very disrespectful of the neighbours. The noise would go on all day. How does Dal take this into account for building projects? The neighbours have to live with the noise everyday, all day. Unfortunately, with the OEC the construction firm needed to work a double-shift (within the constraints of the bylaw) to meet the tight timeline. Counc. Uteck mentioned that there is a notice of motion before council (three meetings ago it was introduced) if passed it would dictate that construction cannot start until 8 a.m. There is a fair bit of rock but Aecon is looking to remove rock as quickly as possible, using new equipment, they’re trying to rip as much as possible.

Could Peter refer the residents to a building that has a building design similar to the proposed design — neighbours are having trouble visualizing the design. Peter didn’t think a similar approach was present, a neighbour indicated that it might be similar to the old IWK. The window design was selected to make it less institutional looking, an attempt to maximize the windows and light within the residence but to have it look more residential in nature. Many of the neighbours indicated displeasure with the design of the windows.

Was there not discussion to have parking included in the building? Yes, initially the building was to have underground parking but it became too costly (90 to 100K per spot). We have an internal committee looking at parking and trying to identify possible solutions, including an active transportation demand study. There was a study that referenced that Dal needed to have just over 1700 spots, where did that number come from — HRM.

Boundary on South Street doesn’t seem to be dealt with in the current design. We have a high level of mischief and pedestrian noise. The stone walls do a better job of
communicating the boundary between the university and neighbourhoods — can the architects put more thought into the transition from campus to neighbourhoods.

Why is there increased pedestrian traffic into the neighbourhoods? It would be great to see more lighting, etc. to draw more activity (especially at night) on the campus. We can take this into account with this building but it is a larger issue. The berms do not communicate the transition well. Agreement from those in attendance, a visual boundary that communicates the transition would be great and that reminds students that they are leaving the campus and going to something different. Will take this back to planning committee.

Where is the service traffic? How do they access the building? The loading doc will be at the South Street side of the building. There will be a screen and partial wall. It will probably end up backing in from LeMarchant and exiting from the same driveway. There is limited deliveries though as there is no food service in the building.

As attractive as the berms are they are inviting students to party in front of neighbours houses, which is not fun. Many of the neighbours present had concerns with the exterior of the building, there is a feeling that it does not fit within the university or the neighbourhood. They want to know if the university will take this into account? Alex indicated that architecture is like art, so it is interpreted differently by different people. Mr. McRae felt that the building will not age well.

Sue Uteck thanked the university for having a meeting but was concerned that the revised sketches do not reflect all the feedback from the neighbours. There have been some changes, some good changes but she’s not sure the look and feel is reflective of Dal and the neighbourhood. Not sure all the neighbours want to look at this design, this is the feedback Counc. Uteck has been hearing from her constituents. Also concerned about the mix of the room structures in the building, especially the three and four bedrooms. Particularly with the changes in the neighbourhood and how the city (HRP) is enforcing noise concerns/complaints.

Have the architects considered using more three-dimensional renderings? Gives a better representation as to what the building will look like. Yes, they were initially done and will be done once a colour palate has been selected.

Where does the dumpster go and will it be visible? It will be behind a screen/retaining wall, approx. 5 ft. below South Street., so no, it won’t be visible.

Is it possible to see how it will look from South Street (if we look from across South Street). At this point the South Street part of the building has not been determined. Residents cannot see/visualize what it will look like. They will be shared once developed.

Several neighbours requested that the university rethink the entrance/exit across from South Street - concerned about increased traffic (especially during the construction).
How will the homes be demolished and how does that contribute to achieving LEED gold? The homes will be deconstructed allowing Dal to divert more than 75% of the houses (hope to get it up to 85 to 90%) from the landfill.

Night light - there is a huge amount of light from Risley Hall, there is a light from Wickwire that is visible into several folks windows. Is there a stairwell or elevator shaft in this building that will increase lighting to South Street? No, the stairwells and the elevators are internal, the windows facing South Street are residence rooms.

Can the neighbours have a commitment to have sketches that show the delineation? What about the wooden fence on Coburg? From a crime prevention standpoint Dal wouldn’t be allowed to construct an 8ft fence on South Street. There is a commitment to complete the design sketches and share with the neighbours. There is a commitment to additional public meetings regarding the landscaping and lighting.

Will there be large equipment drop offs/exchanges in the middle of the night? And idling trucks, this was a problem during the Risley Build. No, there won’t. Aecon handled the building of the Mona Campbell Building and it went very smoothly, Counc. Uteck didn’t receive any complaints on that build. Andrew Merrick, has an extensive briefing with all his trades and everyone working on the project regarding the noise bylaw, it’s also included in his tender packages.

It is appreciated that Dal revisited the colours but the current colour palate is a little cold.