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## Item No. 12.1

Halifax Regional Council  
October 7, 2025  
November 18, 2025

**TO:** Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

**FROM:** Tyler Brothers, Chair, Heritage Advisory Committee

**DATE:** September 24, 2025

**SUBJECT:** **HRTG-2024-02793: Request to Include 1158 South Park Street, Halifax in the Registry of Heritage Properties for the Halifax Regional Municipality**

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### **ORIGIN**

September 24, 2025 meeting of the Heritage Advisory Committee, Item 9.1.1.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council:

1. Set a date for a heritage hearing to consider the inclusion of the subject property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality;
2. Approve the request to include 1158 South Park Street, Halifax, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality, as shown on Map 1 of the staff report dated August 14, 2025, as a municipal heritage property under the Heritage Property Act.

### **BACKGROUND**

At the September 24, 2025 meeting of the Heritage Advisory Committee, the Committee received a staff recommendation report dated August 14, 2025 and received a staff presentation on 1158 South Park Street, Halifax. Staff noted that should the Committee award the property a total score of fifty (50) points or more for the identified property, out of a possible one hundred (100), then the staff recommendation is that the Committee recommend the property for registration by Halifax Regional Council.

For additional background information on this item, refer to the staff report dated August 14, 2025 (Attachment 1).

## **DISCUSSION**

At the September 24, 2025 meeting, following the presentation from staff, the Committee evaluated the proposed heritage property using the Evaluation Criteria for Registration of Heritage Buildings in HRM.

The Committee applied the heritage building criteria to 1158 South Park Street, Halifax in performing the heritage evaluation and provided the following scoring:

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Score</b>
1. Age	13
2A. Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups	20
3. Significance of Architect/Builder	3
4A. Architectural Merit: Construction Type	5
4B. Architectural Merit: Style	10
5. Architectural Integrity	8
6. Relationship to Surrounding Area	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

Based on this evaluation, the Committee approved a motion recommending that Halifax Regional Council schedule a heritage hearing for the matter, and to approve the registration of 1158 South Park Street, Halifax to Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality.

For further discussion on the heritage registration evaluation criteria as it relates to this application, refer to the staff report dated August 14, 2025 (Attachment 1) and the Scoring Summary for Heritage Buildings (Attachment 2).

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated August 14, 2025.

## **RISK CONSIDERATION**

Risk consideration is outlined in the attached staff report dated August 14, 2025.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Heritage Advisory Committee is comprised of ten citizen members and two Councillors. Meetings are live webcast on Halifax.ca. The agenda, reports, video, and minutes of the Committee are posted on Halifax.ca.

For further information on Community Engagement refer to the attached staff report dated August 14, 2025.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Environmental implications are outlined in the attached staff report dated August 14, 2025.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

Alternatives are outlined in the attached staff report dated August 14, 2025.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

#### *Heritage Property Act*

s. 14(1) A heritage advisory committee may recommend to the municipality that a building, public building interior, streetscape, cultural landscape or area be registered as a municipal heritage property in the municipal registry of heritage property.

#### *HRM By-law No. H-200 - Heritage Property By-law*

4. The [Heritage Advisory] Committee shall, within the time limits prescribed by Council or the [Heritage Property] Act, advise the Region respecting:
- (a) the inclusion of buildings, public building interiors, streetscapes, cultural landscapes or areas in the Registry.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Staff Recommendation Report dated August 14, 2025

Attachment 2 – Scoring Summary for Heritage Buildings.

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Report Prepared by: Simon Ross-Siegel, Legislative Assistant, Municipal Clerk's Office 902.292.3962

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## Attachment 1

### **Item No. 9.1.1** **Heritage Advisory Committee** **September 24, 2025**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Heritage Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** August 14, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Case HRTG-2024-02793: Request to Include 1158 South Park Street, Halifax in the Registry of Heritage Properties for the Halifax Regional Municipality

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#### **ORIGIN**

Application for heritage registration by the property owner.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Property owner-initiated heritage registration request.
- 1158 South Park Street (the 'property') was constructed in 1875 by a local carpenter, Alexander McNab.
- The property has historical associations with a prominent writer and professor, James DeMille.
- The dwelling is a Second Empire-style building with a brick foundation, which was likely constructed with balloon framing.
- The building maintains moderate architectural integrity and contributes to the heritage character of the surrounding area.
- There are no financial implications identified.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Should 1158 South Park Street, Halifax score 50 or more points on evaluation as a heritage property under the HRM Heritage Property Program, the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) recommends that Regional Council:

1. Set a date for a heritage hearing to consider the inclusion of the subject property in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality; and
2. Approve the request to include 1158 South Park Street, Halifax, in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality, as shown on Map 1, as a municipal heritage property under the *Heritage Property Act*.

## **BACKGROUND**

The property owner has applied to include the property located at 1158 South Park Street, Halifax (Map 1) in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality. The subject property is situated on the west side of South Park Street between the section of South Street and Inglis Street. The subject property contains a two-and-a-half-storey Second Empire-style residential building, which was constructed in 1875.

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*.



Figure 1: 1158 South Park Street, July 2025

### ***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 principal aims of the Heritage Property Program is to recognize significant heritage resources through the inclusion of properties into the Municipal Registry of Heritage Property.

Under the Heritage Property Program, all registration applications for heritage buildings are evaluated by the HAC using "The Evaluation Criteria for Registration of Heritage Buildings in Halifax Regional Municipality" (Attachment A). The Evaluation Criteria for scoring a property and building are broken down into six categories as follows:

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Highest Possible Score</b>
1. Age	25
2. Historical or Architectural Importance	20
3. Significance of the Architect/Builder	10
4. Architectural Merit	10
5. Architectural Integrity	15
6. Relationship to Surrounding Area	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Should the HAC score a property with more than 50 points on evaluation as a heritage property, a positive recommendation will be forwarded to Regional Council.

### ***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 make a decision on the registration request. Should a positive recommendation be forwarded to Council, heritage staff will ensure the required notices are sent to the owners and deposited at the Registry of Deeds.

### **DISCUSSION**

Heritage registration applications are evaluated by the HAC relative to six evaluation criteria outlined previously, and described in greater detail in Attachment A. To assist the HAC in their evaluation and scoring, staff offer the following comments based on the staff's research report (Attachment B).

#### **1. Age**

The property at 1158 South Park Street, formerly known as 72 South Park Street, is situated within what was once the Smith Fields. The land was subdivided following the death of the last Smith heir in 1861. The lot containing the subject property was eventually acquired by brass founder Donald A. McKay in 1871 and subsequently sold to Alexander W. McNab in 1873, who constructed three Second Empire-style residences, including the subject property. In 1875, the home on the subject property was sold to William H. Creighton. James DeMille, a notable writer, purchased the property through a public auction in 1876 and resided there until his death in 1880. His widow remained until 1901. Construction of the dwelling is most accurately dated to 1875, during McNab's ownership, due to city directory records and legal property descriptions referencing the house's existence in early 1876.

Given the construction date of 1875, staff recommends a score of 13.

#### **2. Historical Importance**

The property is significantly associated with James DeMille (1833–1880), a prominent 19th-century Canadian author and professor. DeMille was widely recognized for his literary output and contributions to higher education. After completing his studies at Acadia College and Brown University, he joined the faculty at Dalhousie College in 1865, where he taught History, English, and Rhetoric until his death. His publication *The Elements of Rhetoric* (1878) reflected his academic stature and pedagogical clarity. DeMille was a prolific writer, publishing over thirty novels and various short stories and essays. His work ranged across historical romance, satire, adventure, and speculative fiction. Notable titles include *The Dodge Club* (1869), *Helena's Household* (1867), and *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* (1888), a foundational work in Canadian science fiction. DeMille purchased the subject property in 1876 and resided there during the most productive phase of his career until his death in 1880.

As one of the most famous Canadian authors in the late 1800s, staff recommends a score between 16 and 20.

#### **3. Significance of Architect or Builder**

The house at 1158 South Park Street was built by Alexander William McNab (1840–1882), a local builder

active in Halifax during the 1870s. Deed records confirm he constructed three Second Empire-style houses at 1144, 1150–1152, and 1158 South Park Street. He also developed many properties in the Halifax south suburb, including three Halifax Box-style houses on Lucknow Street, and properties on Victoria Road. Though little is known about his life, McNab's work indicates a successful building career. The subject property is a representative example of his contribution to the residential development of Halifax's south end during this period.

Given Alexander McNab's local significance, staff recommends a score between 1 and 3.

#### **4.a Architectural Merit: Construction**

The dwelling is a two-and-a-half-storey wood-framing building with a rear ell. It is built atop a rock foundation and has two large brick chimneys. The outside walls were clad with wood shingles but have been replaced with vinyl recently. The property is likely constructed by balloon framing. Balloon framing used dimensional lumber and manufactured nails for the frame of the dwelling, and is particularly notable for the long, continuous studs cut from tall, old-growth trees, which run from the foundation to the roof. This framing method allowed for faster and cheaper construction than the traditional timber framing methods that preceded it. Balloon framing was replaced by platform framing from the 1930s onwards and is growing increasingly less common.

Given the balloon framing construction, staff recommends a score between 4 and 6.

#### **4.b Architectural Merit: Style**

The dwelling is a significant example of the Second Empire style, which was popular in Nova Scotia between 1855 and 1900 and became more ornate in later years. The Second Empire style emerged in France during the reign of Emperor Napoleon III (1852–1870) and gained popularity in North America between the 1860s and 1880s. Characterized by its distinctive mansard roof—a dual-pitched hipped roof named after 17th-century French architect François Mansart—this style allowed for an additional usable attic storey, making it both functional and architecturally expressive. Second Empire buildings often feature ornate detailing, including molded cornices, decorative brackets, dormer windows, and elaborate window surrounds. Facades are typically symmetrical, though asymmetry can occur in residential examples, particularly where towers or projecting bays are present.

Character Defining Elements (CDEs) of the subject property include, but are not limited to:

- Three-storey Second Empire Style house with an asymmetrical plan;
- Mansard roof, with overhanging eaves, on the main building and rear ell;
- Pedimented and gabled dormers with arched-top windows on third-floor mansard roof;
- Gabled dormer on the second-floor mansard roof of the rear ell;
- Two brick chimneys;
- The fenestration on the front façade;
- One arched-top window with stained glass on the north elevation;
- A projecting three-story bay with an entry door; and
- Decorative door surround with sidelights, transoms, corbels, and additional wood detailing.

As a unique example of Second Empire style building, staff recommend a score between 7 and 10.

### **5. Architectural Integrity**

The dwelling retains a moderate level of integrity. While the original form remains largely intact, various material and decorative elements have been altered or removed. A small rear addition within the mansard roof existed by 1951, and later modifications include rear stairs and decks for multi-unit conversion. Original wood siding has been replaced with vinyl, eave brackets removed, window moulded trims removed, and dormers and window trim clad in metal or vinyl. Some original windows remain, though others were

enclosed or replaced. The roof has asphalt shingles, and the foundation and chimney are now coated in concrete. Despite these changes, the house retains a moderate integrity that reflects its Second Empire origins.

Given the moderate architectural integrity, staff recommends a score between 6 and 10.

## **6. Relationship to Surrounding Area**

The subject property is in a predominantly residential area along South Park Street, characterized by two-to-three-storey buildings typical of Halifax's historic low-rise urban fabric. However, ongoing development has introduced mid-and-high-rise apartments into the surrounding blocks. The property lies within the proposed Victoria Road Heritage Conservation District (HCD) and is near several significant heritage areas. To the north is the Schmitzville HCD, a well-preserved neighbourhood of late Georgian and early Victorian wooden houses. To the south, Inglis Street and Tower Road feature cohesive streetscapes of late 19th-century Victorian homes. Although South Park Street is not formally designated, it retains a largely intact streetscape with substantial Victorian-era residences. The subject property, as a Second Empire-style house dating from 1875, contributes meaningfully to this heritage context and reflects the area's 19th-century residential development.

The subject property is an important architectural asset contributing to the heritage character of the surrounding area, so staff recommends a score between 6 and 10.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The HRM costs associated with advertising and processing this application can be accommodated within the approved 2025/2026 operating budget for Planning and Development.

## **RISK CONSIDERATION**

No risk considerations were identified.

## **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. As a provision of the *Heritage Property Act*, no registration of a municipal heritage property shall take place until the Regional Council has given the owner of the property an opportunity to be heard.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

No environmental implications were identified.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

The Heritage Advisory Committee may choose to refuse the application to include 1158 South Park Street, Halifax in the Registry of Heritage Property for the Halifax Regional Municipality if the property scores less than 50 points based on the evaluation criteria. In doing so, the application will not proceed to the Regional Council for evaluation.

**LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*The Heritage Property Act*

**ATTACHMENTS**

Map 1: Location Map

Attachment A: Evaluation Criteria

Attachment B: Staff Research Report

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Report Prepared by: Shaoqiu Gong, Planner I – Heritage, 902.233.9826

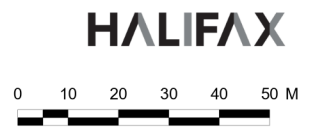
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### Map 1 - Location Map

115 South Park Street,  
Halifax

-  Proposed Victoria Road Conservation District
-  Registered Heritage Properties
-  Subject Property



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

# **Attachment A**

## **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 <sup>th</sup> 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.

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

<b>Architecture</b>	Consider any additions/ removal/ alterations to windows, doors, porches, dormers, roof lines, foundations, chimneys, and cladding.	
<b>Exterior</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Comments</b>
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.*



## Attachment B

# Research Report

1158 South Park Street, Halifax

**Prepared by:**

HRM Planning & Development  
Shaoqiu Gong, Planner I

August 14, 2025



**HALIFAX**

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## Age

The subject property is located at 1158 South Park Street, on the west side of South Park Street in south end Halifax, between South Street and Victoria Road. It was formerly known as 72 South Park Street. Hereafter, it is simply referred to as the subject property.



Figure 1: 1158 South Park Street, July 2025

Originally, the subject property formed part of a larger sixty-acre parcel known as the Smith Fields. In 1812, the Smith family acquired a block bounded by South Street, Tower Road, Inglis Street, and South Park Street, where they operated a farm and tannery. The property was later extended eastward to the freshwater stream located near the intersection of Inglis and Barrington Streets. Upon the death of the last surviving Smith in 1861, the land was subdivided and sold, as illustrated in the 1862 registered plan of the Smith Fields Subdivision<sup>1</sup> (Figure 2).

At the time of subdivision, much of the land was owned by William J. Richardson, a member of the Richardson family, who held several large parcels in the area. The subject property was part of the largest lot shown on the Smith Fields Subdivision plan and owned by William M. Richardson. In 1871, Donald A. McKay, a brass founder, purchased part of this parcel—including what is now 1144, 1150–1152, and 1158 South Park Street<sup>2</sup>. Later in 1873, Alexander W. McNab acquired the land and constructed three Second Empire-style houses<sup>3</sup>. The subject property located at 1158 South Park Street (previously 72 South Park Street), was sold to William H. Creighton in 1875<sup>4</sup>. However, in 1876, a legal dispute arose when Jane Williamson filed a lawsuit against Creighton and Alexander Grant regarding an unpaid mortgage. This led to a public auction at which James DeMille (also spelled De Mille or DeMill) was the highest bidder, acquiring the property for \$3,900 in March 1876<sup>5</sup>.

James DeMille died in 1880<sup>6</sup>, and his widow, Elizabeth Ann Pryor DeMille, resided on the property until 1901<sup>7</sup>. In 1908, she and other heirs sold the property to merchant William S. Munnis and his wife, Louise J. Munnis<sup>8</sup>. In 1931, the Munnises sold the property to Althea I. MacLeod<sup>9</sup>. Her heirs later transferred the property to Dvara Elaine Leventhal (née Zive) in 1959<sup>10</sup>. In 2004, Abraham Leventhal, Dvara’s husband, sold the subject property to the current owner<sup>11</sup>.

According to the 1875–1876 City Directory<sup>12</sup> (Figure 4), 72 South Park Street was first listed as an unoccupied house. In the 1876–1877 directory<sup>13</sup> (Figure 5), James DeMille is recorded as residing at the property. In the parcel description of 1152 South Park Street, the north boundary is “south-east corner of a single house owned by Alexander Grant,” which indicates the house was constructed when Alexander Grant owned it between August 1875 and March 1876<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, it's reasonable to believe that the house in the subject property was built in 1875 by Alexander McNab.

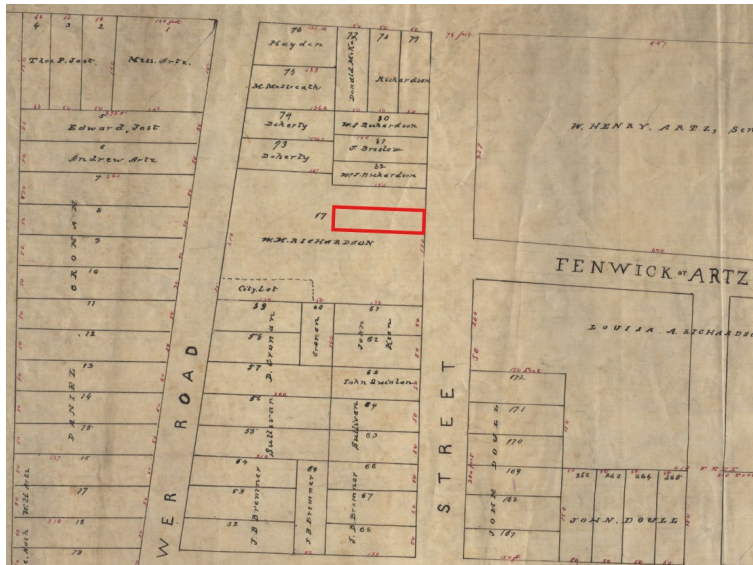


Figure 2: Division Plan of Smith Fields and the approximate location of the subject property

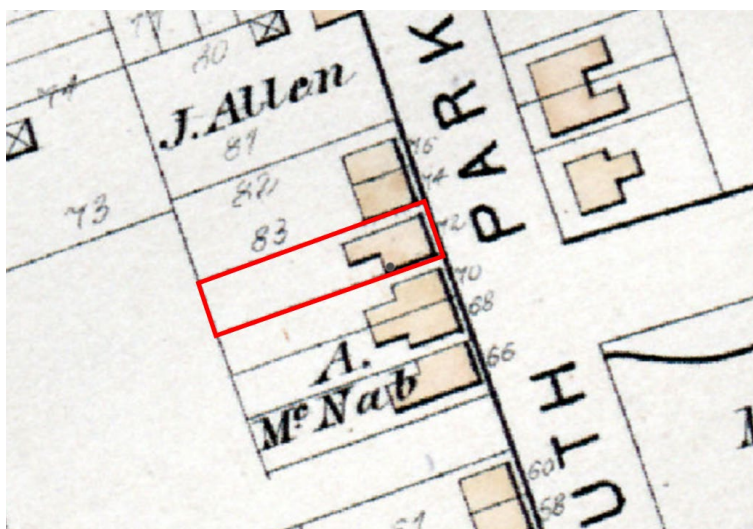


Figure 3: The subject property (highlighted in red) on the Hopkins' City Atlas of Halifax, 1878

Leveiman  
 56 Vacant lot  
 58 King Rich M, of Payzant & King  
 60 King Edwin D, barrister  
 62 and 64 Vacant lots  
 66 House unoccupied  
 68 to 72 Houses unoccupied  
 74 Cody Mary, wid Edward  
 76 House unoccupied  
 Vacant lots

Figure 4:1875-1876 McAlpine's Halifax City Directories

56 Vacant lot  
 58 King Richard, of Payzant & King  
 60 King Edwin, barrister  
 62 to 64 vacant lots  
 66 to 70 Houses unoccupied  
 72 DeMill James, professor Dalhousie  
 College•  
 74 Kenny Elizabeth, wid Ptk

Figure 5:1876-1877 McAlpine's Halifax City Directories

## Historical or Architectural Importance

### Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups

James DeMille (1833-1880), writer and professor

James DeMille (1833–1880) was one of the most accomplished and widely read Canadian authors of the 19th century, as well as a respected educator and scholar. He was born in Saint John, New Brunswick, on August 23, 1833, the son of merchant Nathan Smith DeMill and Elizabeth Budd Tongue. After early education at Horton Academy and Acadia College (now Acadia University), DeMille completed a Master of Arts at Brown University in Rhode Island in 1854. A formative trip through Europe in his youth—visiting England, Scotland, France, and Italy—left a lasting impression on his imagination and later provided settings and inspiration for many of his novels<sup>6</sup>.

Upon returning to the Maritimes, DeMille married Elizabeth Pryor, daughter of Dr. John Pryor, the first president of Acadia College. He briefly ran a book business in Saint John, then turned to academia, joining Acadia College in 1860 as Professor of Classics. In 1865, he moved to Halifax to join the faculty of Dalhousie College (now Dalhousie University), where he held the position of Professor of History, English, and Rhetoric until his death. He was known as a popular and engaging teacher with a sharp wit, a deep knowledge of classical literature, and a love of language. His commitment to education was reflected in his publication of *The Elements of Rhetoric* (1878), a respected textbook that further demonstrated his ability to blend academic rigour with clear and accessible writing<sup>6</sup>.

James DeMille was a prolific author who published over thirty novels along with numerous short stories and essays. His works spanned genres including historical romance, satire, adventure fiction, and early science fiction. Notable works include *The Dodge Club* (1869), a fast-paced travel adventure, and *Helena's Household* (1867), a historical novel set in ancient Rome. He was also a pioneer Canadian juvenile fiction writer through his *Brethren of the White Cross* series (1869–1873), one of the earliest adventure series for boys in Canada. These stories combined school life and maritime adventures, gaining wide popularity among young readers. His most enduring work, *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, was published posthumously in 1888. Blending speculative fiction with satirical themes, it remains a landmark of early Canadian

science fiction and continues to be studied and reprinted today<sup>6</sup>.

James DeMille died in Halifax on January 28, 1880, at the age of 46. At the time of his death, he was at the height of his academic and literary career. His residence at 1158 South Park Street, which he acquired in 1876, is directly associated with this most productive period of his life. DeMille's presence in Halifax and his contributions to both the literary and academic communities form an important chapter in the cultural history of Nova Scotia and Canada.



Figure 6: Portrait of James DeMille

### **Important / Unique Architectural Style or Highly Representative of an Era**

The subject property is an excellent example of the Second Empire style. This style is derived from the official style popular in France and its colonies during the reign of Napoleon III (1850-1870). Exhibitions in Paris in 1855 and 1867 helped to popularize the style in England, and it later spread to North America. Nova Scotia also attended the 1867 Paris Exhibition, which may have helped the spread in Nova Scotia. The Second Empire style was particularly suited to large public buildings, and they are adjusted to accommodate residences in small town plots and suburban estates. At the end of the 19th century, adding a mansard roof was a popular way of modernizing an older gable-roofed house while gaining more living space<sup>15</sup>.

Please see section "Architectural Merit: Style" below for more information about the features of the Second Empire style.

## Significance of Architect or Builder

According to deed records, the subject property was constructed by local builder and carpenter Alexander William McNab (1840–1882). Although limited biographical information is available, the extent of McNab’s work suggests he was a successful builder during his time. He was active in the Smith Field area of Halifax’s south suburb, where he built and developed numerous lots. Deed records indicate that he constructed the three Second Empire-style houses at 1144, 1150–1152, and 1158 South Park Street (Figure 7)<sup>3</sup>. He also built three Halifax Box style houses at 1046, 1048, and 1052 Lucknow Street (Figure 8)<sup>16</sup>. McNab developed additional properties on Victoria Road<sup>17</sup>, although specific civic addresses have not been identified. McNab’s work extended to Dartmouth, including a house at 51 North Street (Figure 9)<sup>18</sup>. An advertisement in a city directory (Figure 10) indicates that he was also capable of brick construction<sup>19</sup>, though no remaining buildings have been documented through research.



Figure 7: Second Empire-style houses at 1146, 1150–1152, and 1158 South Park Street (the subject property), Halifax, constructed by Alexander McNab

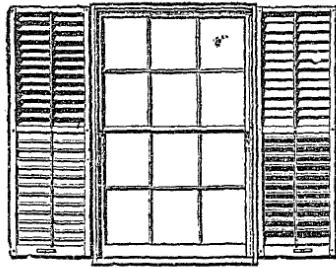


Figure 8: Halifax Box style houses at 1046, 1048, and 1052 Lucknow Street, Halifax, built by Alexander McNab



Figure 9: 51 North Street, Dartmouth, built by Alexander McNab

A. W. M<sup>C</sup>NAB.



*CARPENTER AND BUILDER,*

NOS. 36 & 38 HOLLIS STREET,

Contracts taken for Wood or Brick Buildings. All  
Carpenters' Work punctually executed by experienced  
Workmen.

Figure 10: Alexander McNab's advertisement in 1874-1875 McAlpine's Halifax City Directory

# Architectural Merit

## Construction Type or Building Technology

The subject property is a three-storey wood-framing building with a rear ell. It is built atop a rock foundation and has two large brick chimneys. The outside walls were clad with wood shingles but have been replaced with vinyl recently.

Constructed circa 1875, the subject property is likely an example of balloon frame construction; however, staff did not have access to the building's interior, nor were structural photographs provided by the applicant. Emerging in the mid-19th century, balloon framing remained the predominant method of construction into the early 20th century. A full-height projecting bay is located on the north side of the principal façade, contributing to the building's asymmetrical composition—a feature made possible by the flexibility of balloon framing compared to traditional timber framing.

Balloon framing used dimensional lumber and manufactured nails for the frame of the dwelling, and is particularly notable for the long, continuous studs cut from tall, old-growth trees, which run from the foundation to the roof. This framing method allowed for faster and cheaper construction than the traditional timber framing methods that preceded it. Balloon framing was replaced by platform framing from the 1930s onwards and is growing increasingly less common.



Figure 11: Stone foundation of the subject property, July 2025

## Style

The subject property is a significant example of the Second Empire style, which was popular in Nova Scotia between 1855 and 1900 and became more ornate over time. The Second Empire style, emerged in France during the reign of Emperor Napoleon III (1852–1870) and gained popularity in North America between the 1860s and 1880s. Characterized by its distinctive mansard roof—a dual-pitched hipped roof named after 17th-century French architect François Mansart—this style allowed for an additional usable attic storey, making it both functional and architecturally expressive. Second Empire buildings often feature ornate detailing, including moulded cornices, decorative brackets, dormer windows, and elaborate window surrounds.

Facades are typically symmetrical, though asymmetry can occur in residential examples, particularly where towers or projecting bays are present.<sup>15,20</sup>

In North America, the style was commonly applied to both public and private buildings, ranging from grand civic structures to modest urban residences. Emperor Napoleon III died in 1870, but the Second Empire style was used extensively for another 20 years in Nova Scotia and was especially popular in the French-speaking regions. There are many examples of Second Empire dwellings in south end Halifax, as well.

### Character Defining Elements [CDEs]

CDEs of the subject property include, but are not limited to:

- Three-storey Second Empire Style house with an asymmetrical plan;
- Mansard roof, with overhanging eaves, on the main building and rear ell;
- Pedimented and gabled dormers with arched-top windows on third-floor mansard roof;
- Gabled dormer on the second-floor mansard roof of the rear ell;
- Two brick chimneys;
- The fenestration on the front façade;
- One arched-top window with stained glass on the north elevation;
- A projecting three-story bay with an entry door; and
- Decorative door surround with sidelights, transoms, corbels, and additional wood detailing.



Figure 12: East elevation, July 2025



Figure 13: Southwest corner, July 2025



Figure 14: Northwest corner, July 2025



Figure 15: Entry door with transom, side lights, corbels and decorative panels, July 2025



Figure 16: Brick chimneys and a dormer on the mansard roof, July 2025



Figure 17: Arched-top window with stained glass on the north elevation, July 2025

## Architectural Integrity

The house on the subject property retains a moderate level of integrity. The overall form remains largely intact, with the exception of the rear deck and stair additions. However, numerous decorative and material elements have been altered or removed (Figure 19). Based on available historical photographs, fire insurance plans, historical maps, and visual inspection, several modifications have been identified.

A small rear addition on the south side appears to have been constructed into the original mansard roof. The fire insurance plan dated November 1951 depicts this addition, suggesting it was in place by that time (Figure 19). To facilitate conversion into a multi-unit dwelling, rear stairs and deck structures were added, penetrating the exterior wall and likely affixed to the building's original framework (Figure 21).

Many original windows appear to remain, though they are now enclosed with modern storm windows, and the surrounding trim has been clad in metal panels. Some windows have been replaced, and several new openings have been introduced. The original wood trim on the front façade has been removed. The dormers, likely original, are now clad in vinyl or metal (Figure 20).

The original wood siding has been replaced with vinyl, and decorative elements such as the eave brackets (corbels) have been removed. The roof has been re-covered with asphalt shingles. Both the brick chimney and foundation have been coated in concrete.

Despite these moderate alterations, the property continues to convey its origins as a representative example of the Second Empire style.



Figure 18: 1918 H. P. Pickins map depicts the subject property's original plan

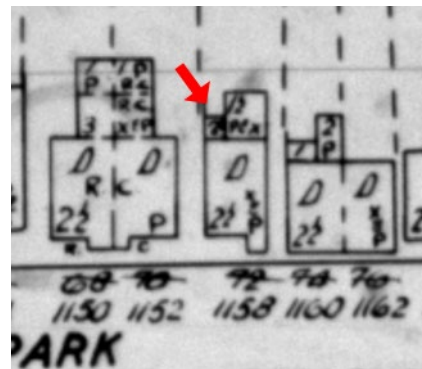


Figure 19: 1952 Fire Insurance Plan (revised 1961, 1963, 1965 and 1971) depicts the rear addition



Figure 20: Historical photo (c. 1985) indicates the absence of the moulded window trims, eave brackets, wood siding and dormer details



Figure 21: Rear addition highlighted in red and stairs and decks highlighted in yellow, July 2025



Figure 22: Rear addition and new window opening, July 2025

# Relationship to Surrounding Area

## Neighbourhood Scale and Use:

The immediate context of the subject property is predominantly residential in character, with most surrounding buildings ranging from two to three storeys in height. These structures on the west side of South Park Street generally reflect the historic low-rise scale typical of the area. However, as the neighbourhood undergoes ongoing development, several mid-rise and high-rise apartment buildings have been introduced within the surrounding blocks.

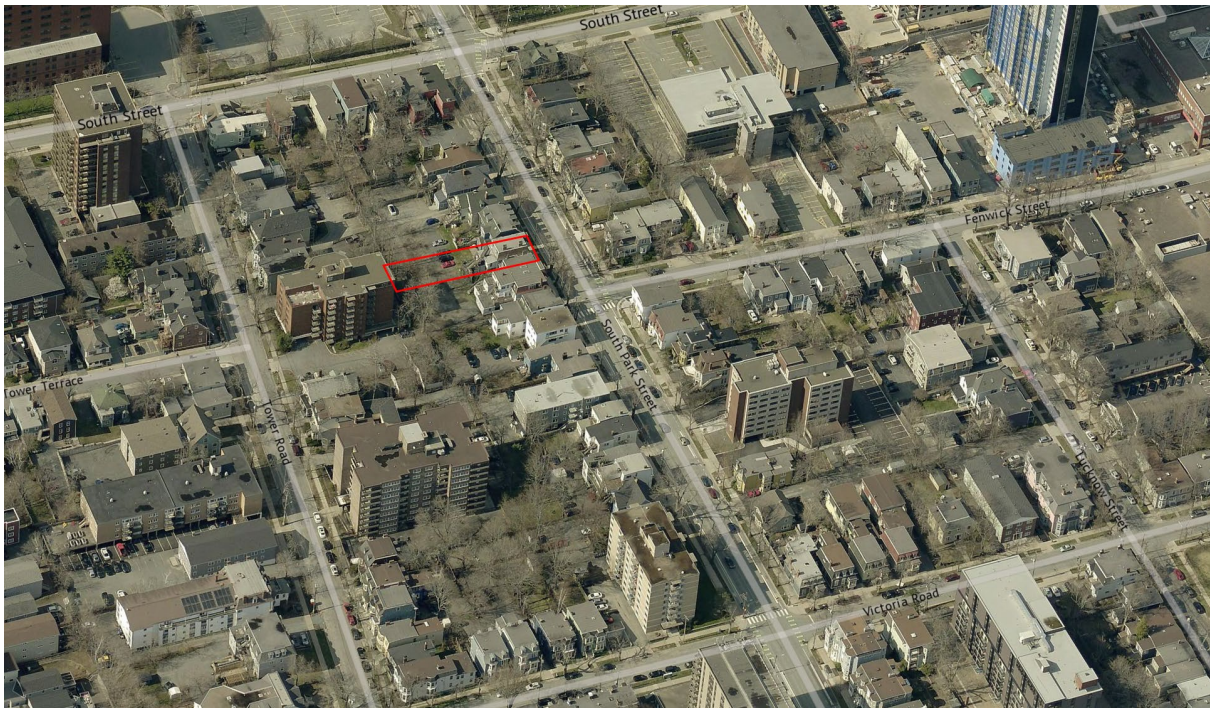


Figure 23: Bird view of the subject property's surrounding environment

## Proximity to heritage resources:

The subject property is situated within the proposed Victoria Road Heritage Conservation District (HCD), and is in proximity to abundant heritage resources. The Schmidville HCD, one of Halifax's oldest residential neighbourhoods, lies to the north and is notable for its cohesive ensemble of late Georgian and early Victorian wooden houses, many dating from the early to mid-19th century. Schmidville retains a largely intact traditional streetscape, exemplifying early urban residential development in the city.

To the south, two well-preserved heritage streetscapes are located along Inglis Street and Tower Road. Inglis Street features a continuous row of late 19th-century Victorian dwellings, many exhibiting decorative elements such as bracketed cornices, bay windows, and ornate wooden trim. Tower Road similarly maintains a strong historical character, with substantial Victorian-era houses set on generous lots, reflecting the area's development as a prestigious residential corridor in the late 1800s.

Although South Park Street, where the subject property is located, is not formally registered, it retains a relatively intact streetscape, including large residential homes in various Victoria styles. The majority of the buildings along this portion of the street appear in the 1878 Hopkins City Atlas of Halifax. As one representative example of the Second Empire-style building, the subject property contributes to the heritage context of the South Park streetscape.

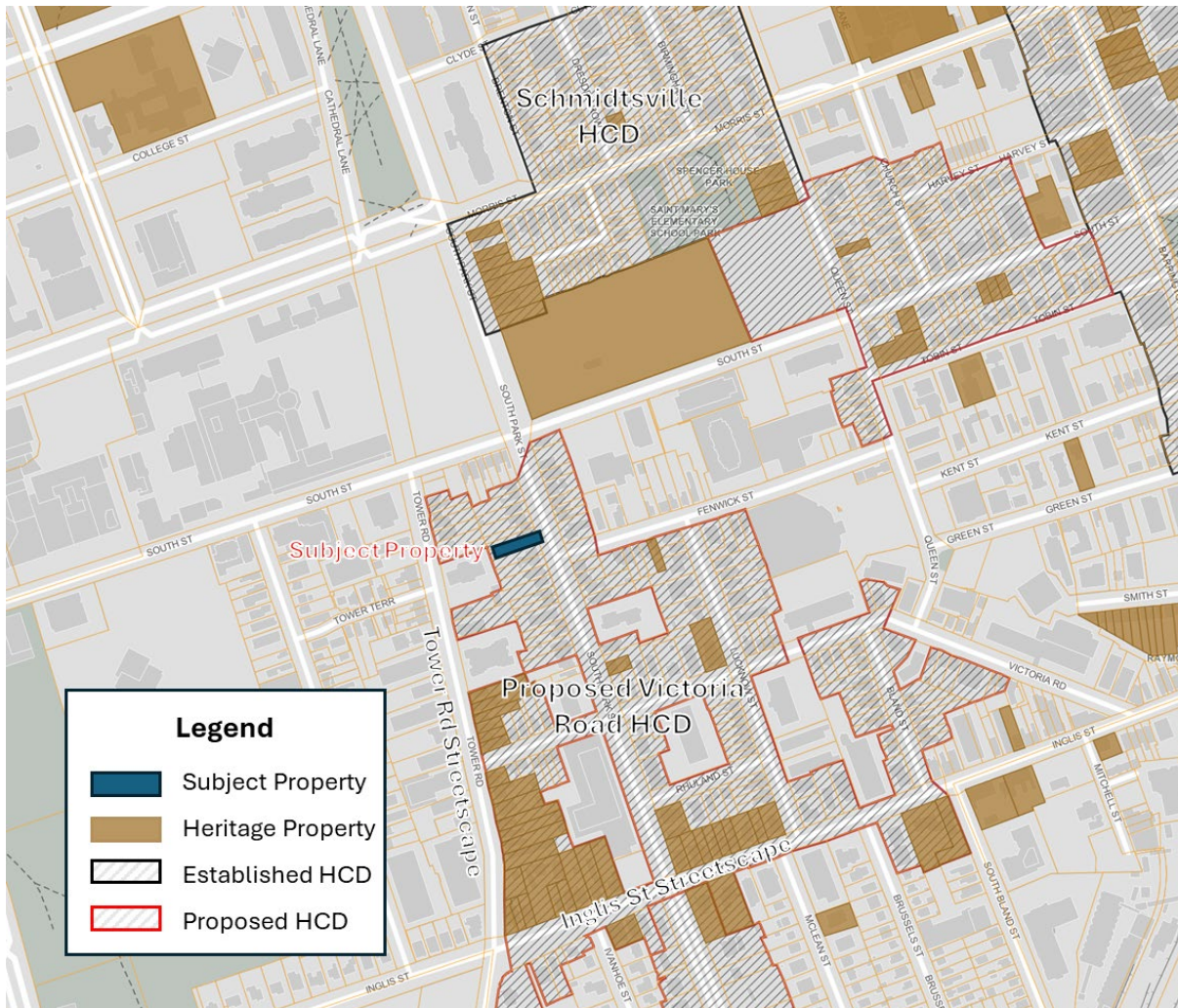


Figure 24: Map highlights the subject property in relation to nearby heritage resources

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## Attachment 2

**Scoring for HRTG-2024-02793: Request to Include 1158 South Park Street, Halifax in the Registry of Heritage Properties for the Halifax Regional Municipality**

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<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Score Awarded</b>
1. Age	13
2A. Relationship to Important Occasions, Institutions, Personages or Groups	20
3. Significance of Architect/Builder	3
4A. Architectural Merit: Construction Type	5
4B. Architectural Merit: Style	10
5. Architectural Integrity	8
6. Relationship to Surrounding Area	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>