

HALIFAX

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DECLASSIFIED

FOIPOP Review: [REDACTED]

Approved to Release: [REDACTED]

Date: December 17, 2025

Item No. 17.2

**Halifax Regional Council
November 18, 2025
In Camera (In Private)**

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Brad Anguish, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 03, 2025

SUBJECT: Turret Arts Space Society Funding Request

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

ORIGIN

March 20, 2025, Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee – Turret Arts Space Society gave a presentation on a funding request in support of development of the 1588 Barrington Street building (more commonly known as the Khyber or Turret Building) as an arts space.

MOVED by Councillor St-Amand and seconded by Councillor Kent THAT the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee request a staff report responding to the request of the Turret Arts Society, and addressing options for municipal support, including funding, to the Society to contribute to their project of restoring the Turret/Khyber building and bringing the historic arts hub and community space to back to life. **MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report addresses confidential property and contractual matters and as such, it is recommended that this report remain confidential.

During the March 20, 2025, Community Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting, Turret Art Space Society (TASS) requested \$1,501,000 in municipal funding. This report outlines the top-line financial implications, risk assessment, and history of the project. Staff have reviewed the 2025 funding request in full and have deemed it either ineligible or not recommended. Staff recommend that Regional Council decline the full Turret Art Space Society funding request and approve invoking the Buy-Back of 1588 Barrington Street. Additional municipal funding will not materially advance making the building operational. This TASS proposal does not meet the threshold or standard applied to similar funding requests from external not-for-profit organizations and to date, there has been no significant fundraising or additional government funding secured for the capital project.

On May 22, 2018, Regional Council approved the conveyance of 1588 Barrington Street, Halifax, through a less than market value (\$1,00) sale to the Turret Art Space Society (TASS), formerly 1588 Barrington Building Preservation Society. The terms of that sale dictated that TASS would conduct necessary capital upgrades to the building within two years of the sale to make the building operational and safe for public use and operate it as an arts incubator space. In 2018 the building was assessed at \$1,498,600. In addition, the HRM contribution included a grant of \$250,000 through a contribution agreement to support asbestos abatement and carrying costs.

Since the 2018 conveyance, the building remains non-operational and is closed to the public. The group has also chosen to not renew property insurance on the asset while maintaining third-party liability, due to lack of funds. There is serious concern that after 12 years of remaining vacant, the unoccupied building is a threat to safety through continued deterioration and of risk of fire and damage to abutting buildings such as Neptune Theatre. The longer the building remains unoccupied and repairs are deferred, the greater the risk that it will not be possible to redevelop and save the building. Invoking the buyback agreement to better secure the building is a means of mitigating the risk in the short term.

Since 2018, the municipal financial contribution to this society and their project is substantial. It has included the less than market value sale of the building (valued at \$1,498,600), a contribution towards asbestos abatement and carrying costs (\$250,000), and tax relief for seven years (\$227,397) totaling \$1,975,997. The organization is self-declared in deficit (confirmed by staff review of financial statements from 2020-2024) for a revised capital plan (2023) which significantly increased the scope of the project and building costs. Investing an additional \$1,500,000 will not make the building open or operational. The fundraising to date does not match the needs of the revised and ambitious capital plan. Staff are not confident that the organization has the capacity to realize the plan. Staff recommend that Regional Council decline the TASS funding request and proceed with the buy-back of the property.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Regional Council:

1. Decline the request for a one-time contribution of \$1,501,000 to the Turret Arts Space Society;
2. Authorize the Municipality to exercise any rights to buy back 1588 Barrington Street, Halifax, pursuant to the Agreement of Purchase and Sale and the Buy-Back Agreement and direct the Acting CAO to direct staff to take all steps necessary to do so.
3. Approve the funding for the acquisition and stabilization of the property from the Turret Arts Space Society as estimated in the Financial Implications section of this report;
4. Declare the property surplus for the purposes of the Municipality and recategorize the property as extraordinary and direct the CAO to initiate a disposal strategy for the property, which will seek to sell the property, with future redevelopment that meets the requirements of the Heritage Conservation District, and the authorities under Administration Order 2018-004 Respecting Real Property;
5. It is further recommended that this report not be released to the public.

BACKGROUND

The building at 1588 Barrington Street, Halifax (the “building”) has been the subject of various reports and transactions over the past several decades. A timeline summary of the history of this project is provided in Attachment 2.

This report originates from a \$1,501,000 funding request that the Turret Arts Space Society presented to CPED on March 20, 2025 (Attachment 1). The funds requested from HRM are to support on-going project planning (fund-raising plan, operationalization plan, tender documents to get the project “shovel ready”) as well as funds spread over a three-year period to clear debt, provide ongoing operating costs and address deficit.

Proponent Profile

The society was incorporated as the 1588 Barrington Building Preservation Society (RJSC#3292974) in September 2015 for the purpose of acquiring and transforming 1588 Barrington Street into an arts incubator. In 2019 the society changed its name to the Turret Art Space Society and in 2021 obtained registered charitable status (CRA#802265926-RR002) under the Community Benefit/Arts category. Their mandate as described on the [CRA charities directorate](#) is to advance the public appreciation of the arts by providing a community arts space/hub for the public presentation of art exhibitions, films, musical, theatrical, dance and other performances, and visual arts productions, as well as providing a forum for qualified artists to exhibit, present, or perform their artistic works through participation in such events, thereby creating accessible opportunities for artists and arts organizations working in a variety of artistic disciplines to enhance innovative artistic practices. TASS is also mandated to advance education by providing educational workshops and programs for arts organizations, individual artists and the general public on topics related to the performing and visual arts.

Initial and Revised Project Overview (2018-2022)

On March 22, 2016, Regional Council declared 1588 Barrington Street, Halifax, surplus to municipal operational requirements and approved disposal through the Community Interest category of Administrative Order 50. In 2018, Regional Council approved conveyance of the building for the sum of \$1.00 to the 1588 Barrington Building Preservation Society (now known as TASS) for use as an arts incubator/cultural hub¹. The staff report to Regional Council, included a draft Buy-Back Agreement. (Administrative Order 50 Disposal of Surplus Real Property – PID 00076471 1588 Barrington Street, Halifax. Attachment 3).

In 2018, TASS had proposed a re-development of the property. The proposal and architectural plans (David Garret & Graham Duffus) included the addition of a fourth storey to house additional office and studio spaces, an elevator which could access a shared accessible ramp with Neptune Theatre and updates to the existing building. The gallery, performance, office and studio spaces would be retained and the plan included both commercial and less-than market leases to offset building operating costs and provide varied opportunities for several arts organizations within the creation of the arts and cultural hub (Attachment 4).

As initially proposed, re-development costs were estimated to be \$3,205,200 including:

- Capital improvements/partial fit-up and contingencies: \$2,830,000
- Design and engineering final project plan: \$ 224,000
- Project management: \$ 151,200

¹ “Arts and Cultural Incubator” is defined in a 2010 report to Regional Council directing staff to proceed with operating 1588 Barrington Street be operated as such. An **Arts and Cultural Incubator** is defined as “a facility focused on new or emerging art disciplines, artists and arts organizations, with an emphasis on creativity and innovation (e.g.: rehearsal studios, creation and presentation spaces, offices, meeting rooms, design studios).” At the time, the only arts incubator proposed for HRM was the project at 1588 Barrington Street.

In addition to the capital cost, the project included \$300,000 of operating expenditures for holding costs, a capital campaign and a sustainability fund. The initial financing plan envisaged \$1,800,000 in government grants and \$1,700,000 in self-generated fundraising for a combined total of \$3,500,000.

As part of the 2018 conveyance, TASS was also awarded a conditional grant by HRM of up to \$250,000 of which \$225,000 was a grant towards asbestos abatement/environmental remediation. Because the grant was outside an established municipal grant program it is the subject of a Contribution Agreement (Attachment 5).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

It has now been nearly twelve (12) years since the building was occupied and operational. As an important heritage asset, it is at risk of continued decline if structural and other issues are not addressed. TASS has been unable to either fundraise or acquire government grants for its proposal and it has not provided any evidence or arguments suggesting that additional time will secure its success. Further to this, the economic conditions have changed considerably since the original proposal making it more difficult to achieve the proposed goals.

Revised Project Overview (2023 – 2025)

Between 2018 and 2023, TASS received over \$700,000 in federal and provincial funding for development of an Impact Strategy, including updated new architectural plans in support of a revised capital project, as outlined below. This has resulted in a more expensive capital plan with reduced capacity to generate revenue and reduces the amount of square footage allocated directly for use by professional arts organizations.

With a new timeline, TASS revised their original proposal in 2023-2024, and with approximately \$700,000 in new government funding, developed new architectural plans (Abbott and Brown) and created a new operating model, as described in the TASS Impact Strategy (Attachment 7). The redesign prioritized accessibility through a common main entrance accessible to all building users and smoother accessibility pathways throughout the building in contrast with the original proposal which provided limited accessibility through a new shared entrance and series of lifts throughout. The original 2018 design considered an additional revenue stream with a café and co-creation space which is lost in the redesigned plan and moves away from the initial plan to create an arts incubator.

The newly proposed project is estimated to cost \$18,000,000, which is a significant increase in the estimated capital project. TASS has applied for federal funding [REDACTED] while also seeking provincial, municipal and private funding. [REDACTED]

Currently, the group is seeking \$1,501,000² from HRM which includes funds to get the project to Construction Documents and “Tender Ready”, Operating Support for 2024-2027, and collaboration with HRM to develop a Queer Heritage Designation Pilot and Building Ownership Model. The group has raised and spent approximately \$1,000,000 since 2021 (~3% from donations, and ~97% from government funding) on the project to date. While extensive abatement has taken place, the repairs have not been completed, the building remains closed to the public and the proposed incubator is not operational.

² Please note that the funding request was rounded by TASS in their presentation to \$1,500,000 but when added is actually \$1,501,000.

DISCUSSION

HRM values the contributions of non-profit organizations in arts and culture service delivery and considers partnerships with non-profits when assessing the need for facilities and their operation. The TASS request falls outside of an established municipal grant program. The *Grants to Professional Arts Organizations* provides funding for operational costs and artistic projects, for professional arts organizations that are in year-round or ongoing seasonal operation. While it provides operating and project funding, it does not provide an avenue to support venue purchases or capital investments. The *Community Grants Program* includes a Capital Grant category of up to \$25,000 however, the Community Arts category supports non-professional arts organizations and art projects undertaken by groups whose mandate is not arts specific.

Although the Municipality does not have an established program for the TASS proposal, ad hoc funding requests to help a non-profit organization purchase a property are not uncommon. Recent examples of Regional Council-approved capital grants to support property purchases include:

- \$100,000 to RadStorm Community Arts Society (2025)
- \$750,000 to the Nova Scotia Nature Trust - Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes (2020);
- \$500,000 to the Bus Stop Theatre Cooperative (2019);
- \$300,000 to the Nova Scotia Nature Trust - 100 Wild Islands (2016); and
- \$2,500,000 to Tennis Canada (2016).

There are also examples where HRM has supported non-profit organizations to support lease holder improvements, such as contributions of comparable value, building donations, and capital grants to renovate facilities. Some of these examples include:

- \$100,000 annually to Lake District Recreational Association (2025-2030)
- \$300,000 to the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame (2025);
- \$1,000,000 to the Link Performing Arts Society (Culture Link) (2018);
- \$2,000,000 to the Discovery Centre (2016); and
- \$500,000 to the Citadel Theatre Society (2011).

There are also examples where HRM has supported non-profit organizations through operating funds through service level agreements:

- \$200,000 annually to the Discovery Centre (2024-2029)
- \$200,000 to the Discovery Centre Biodiversity and Aquarium facility (2025).

The municipality has several plans and priorities that align with the need of municipal investment in cultural spaces. Since 2016 when Council expressed a vision for the building as an arts incubator the broader goals of this project have aligned with many initiatives HRM is currently working towards. These include (but are not limited to):

- HRM Strategic Priorities Plan (2021-2025)
- HRM's Performing & Visual Arts Venues Study (2024)
- HRM's Culture and Heritage and Priorities Plan (2023-2033)
- Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan (2021)

While HRM is the second fastest growing municipality in Canada, the number of professional performing and visual art venues operating here has declined over the past decade. Market analysis and stakeholder engagement indicates that there is a venue shortage in HRM and increasing rental costs could worsen the shortage. Without intervention to secure venues, the arts scene will be constrained, reducing availability to residents of a component of quality of life and an important driver of economic growth.

Between the original 2016 plans and the 2023 impact strategy and architecture plans, costs have increased from \$5,000,000 to an estimated \$20,000,000 in capital costs. The 2025 CPED funding request will go towards continued costs for consulting and ongoing planning and does not significantly include any hard costs associated with improving the condition of the building.

Submission Review

As with other recent capital grant requests specific to the support of cultural facilities, staff have applied criteria to assess the viability of the project. Proposed projects are evaluated under the following categories:

1. Feasibility of the project assessed through a review of the submission documents and proof of concept through a sound business plan and financial pro forma;
2. Support from other levels of government or private investment and fundraising; and
3. Measurement against council priority outcomes and mandates.

In considering the TASS proposal, an internal review team was formed with staff from Parks & Recreation (Culture & Community), Finance, Corporate Real Estate, Corporate Facility Design & Construction, and Legal Services. Each of these criteria were assessed and reviewed.

The TASS Impact Strategy outlines its goal to bring the building back to life through 3 key impact strategies:

1. Strengthen the dynamism of downtown and contribute to economic growth.
2. Generate, attract, retain and develop talent and increase exportability of arts and culture.
3. Activate queer heritage into the present and future building and enhancing key demand generators.

The project relies on key anchor tenants paying less than market value leases on the project however the tenant structure has changed since the initial proposal was considered in 2016. Table 1 illustrates the current proposed anchor tenants and their respective history with the project.

Table 1			
Tenant	Description	Designation	History with project
Khyber Arts Society (KAS)	A queer-led artist-run centre that presents non-commercial artwork offering a self-led platform for artists and their practices. Operated out of the Turret building until 2014 when it was closed.	Professional Arts organization (non-profit)	Key anchor tenant since project inception
Leave Out Violence Nova Scotia (LOVE NS)	Supports youth through programs and healthy relationships that build emotional intelligence and help overcome challenges. They do this through many modalities, arts programming being one of them.	Community organization (non-profit)	Joined project in 2023
IOTA Institute (IOTA)	Supports the research, creation, and dissemination of art. IOTA will oversee the Turret Arts Space learning centre which will offer an international residency program.	Arts business (for profit)	Joined project in 2023

While the project remains in overall alignment with Council’s goals of creating an arts incubator space, the additional tenant outside of the arts sector comes at a cost of creation and presentation space that was in the initial proposal.

The Impact Strategy also includes a six-year financial proforma, a twenty-year cash flow forecast, and financial modelling produced for TASS by consultant NewGround Leadership. The financial model combines their fundraising strategy (beginning in 2026), with financing and government funding and relies on HRM providing 100% relief of Property Tax as well as subsidizing 100% of building maintenance costs, a model that does not exist within HRMs current portfolio. Staff note that the financial proforma indicates approximately ~\$400,000 “short fall to be funded” which, through conversations with the group, is meant to be solved via a capital fundraising strategy developed and delivered as part of the current ask for \$1,500,000. This presents an element of risk to the contribution as it assumes the success of the fundraising strategy that is to be developed with a portion of the requested funds. The financial model and business plan do not include any contingencies should TASS fall short of their fundraising goals of the project.

Table 2 represents the funding categories as per the TASS CPED presentation, with the addition of a staff recommendation for each category.

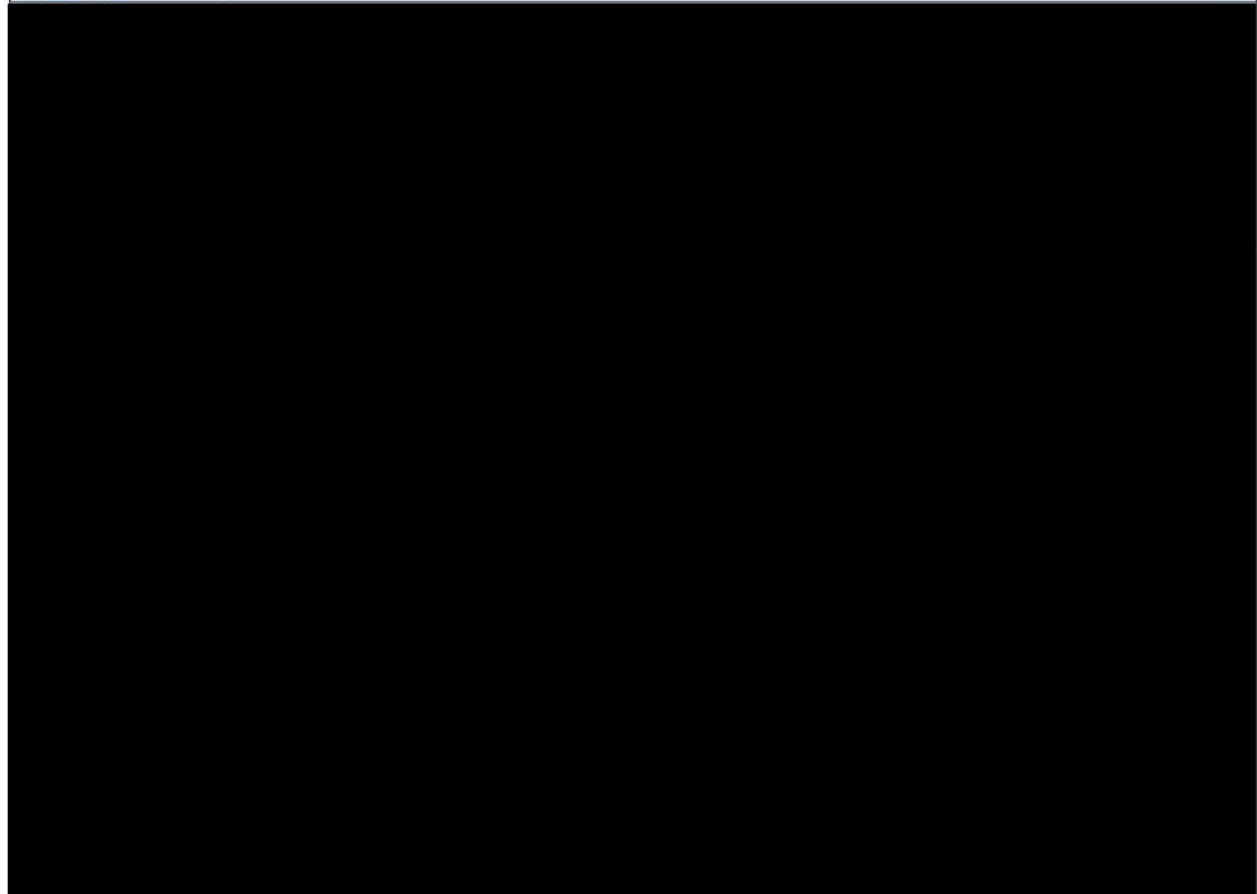
Table 2			
Category	Description	Amount	Funding Recommendation
Construction tender "shovel ready" with complete Operationalization plan and business case ready for implementation	Complete abatement, site security, site preparation, insurance	\$233,000	Abatement and capital improvements are eligible under typical contribution agreements.
	Construction documents and interpretive heritage planning	\$380,000	Not recommended, as sets funding precedent.
	Operationalization planning and funding strategy	\$240,000	Not recommended, as sets funding precedent and was previously declined.
	Communications and marketing	\$35,000	Not recommended, as sets funding precedent and was previously declined.
	Project management and strategic planning	\$100,000	Not recommended, as sets funding precedent and was previously declined.
	Legal, accounting and procurement planning	\$45,000	Not recommended, as sets funding precedent.
	Contingency/risk (10%), Discounted Tax (7.5%)	\$188,000	Group is receiving tax relief (see tax relief section below) however they are not currently operational.
Ongoing Operating Support	Property tax, insurance interim building protection 2025-2027	\$100,000	Ineligible due to not being operational.
Immediate Emergency Operating Support	To address 2024-2025 deficit related to building maintenance and utilities, insurance costs including property Insurance, tax relief, project management work.	\$50,000	Subsection 44 (e) of tax relief policy excludes debts of an organization. A cash grant to pay debt would be precedence-setting.
Collaboration with HRM	To develop Queer Heritage Designation Pilot and Building Ownership Model	\$130,000	Not recommended, as sets funding precedent and is not currently a model supported by HRM.
TOTAL		\$1,501,000	

Municipal Tax Relief

Following conveyance of the property in November 2018, the assessment classification changed from Commercial Exempt to Commercial Taxable pro-rated for the period November 30, 2018, to March 31, 2019. TASS made an application to the Tax Relief Program. As tax relief cannot be granted retroactively to a prior fiscal year the applicant was referred to HRM Finance should they wish to pay taxes in installments. Although TASS did not pay the 2018 taxes, they did appeal the property's assessed value to Property Valuation Services Corporation ("PVSC").

Below is a timeline of Municipal Tax Relief that TASS has received.

Table 3



In 2025, after HRM's tax relief grant has been deducted the balance payable by TASS is estimated to be \$5,658. Due to the disruption to Canada Post services the bill will be issued in October and the due date amended accordingly. TASS set up a payment plan in 2022, however, they canceled the payment plan in August 2025. Given that payments received to date in 2025 have been applied to arrears incurred in 2024 it is anticipated there will be an estimated balance of \$5,465 due in 2025.

TASS will be required to pay the taxes payable and the payments already received will cover only a portion of the taxes due. The assumption is that the group does not have the funding to pay the taxes and requires immediate operating support for the remainder of the 2025-2026 property taxes. If the taxes are not paid in full by the due date, the balance owing will accrue interest at a rate of 15% annually, in accordance with *Administrative Order 14 Respecting the Application of Interest Charges on Outstanding Accounts*. Further, subsection 44 (e) of *Administrative Order 2024-001-ADM* excludes debts of an organization for the purposes of determining eligibility and classification for Tax Relief.

Support from Other Orders of Government and Fundraising

When arts and culture organizations, like TASS, have submitted funding requests to the Municipality, contributions from the Province of Nova Scotia, Government of Canada or proof of significant private fundraising are normally included and generally expected. In practice, HRM is typically not the first funder

³ The new program features a minimum tax payable (\$150) and maximum tax payable threshold (\$25,000). Interest is applied on arrears. Failure to submit an annual Confirmation Form will trigger a 50% penalty apportioned between the interim and final tax bills.

⁴ In accordance with *Administrative Order 18 Respecting Revenue Collection* tax sale proceedings shall commence after three (3) years of arrears but may be deferred for up to 2 years under a payment plan.

at the table and usually the smallest contributor except for a few cases that present unique and feasible opportunities.

The proposal presented to CPED in March 2025 will require \$18,500,000 in investment including \$10,500,000 in public and \$8,000,000 in private funds to be fully achieved. An economic breakdown of the project is provided in the CPED presentation (Attachment 1). Since launching their capital fundraising campaign in October 2024, TASS has raised \$23 as reported in their 2024 financial statements and currently have just over \$2,000 liquid cash in their account with over \$43,000 in outstanding payables to consultants, utilities and insurance. The funds requested are needed, in part, to retire these debts but also include additional consulting fees to redevelop the fundraising strategy. This means that funds the municipality were to provide at this time would not fully support the project but would in part address a deficit.

Currently TASS is awaiting results in the final evaluation stage of Federal infrastructure funding through the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program. The announcements for this funding program were delayed by the Federal election but are expected within the next six months. TASS has requested \$8,000,000 in investment from this program. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the remainder of funding would come from the following sources, none of which have been confirmed or funded:

- Municipal, [REDACTED]
- Provincial, [REDACTED]
- Federal, [REDACTED]
- Private, [REDACTED]

TASS has not secured any additional funding beyond the approximately \$1,000,000 that was previously raised through government funding and spent in acquiring, partially abating the building, and redesigning the architectural plan to accommodate the needs of new anchor tenants and increased accessibility. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The request presents risk that would be mitigated if there was clear and proven engagement and fundraising from the community. Without this in place there appears to be no funding capacity to complete the project. If HRM were to approve the request of \$1,500,000 it would come with significant risks, due to the challenges outlined with the viability of the overall proposed project.

Buy-Back Agreement

If Council denies the TASS request for additional funding, Council may consider repurchasing the property.

HRM conveyed the property to the Society pursuant to an Agreement of Purchase and Sale for the Society's intended use as "an arts incubator and cultural hub for the provision of space and resources to emerging artists and arts organizations within a collaborative, multi-disciplinary environment." The Society agreed to operate the Property continuously in accordance with the Intended Use. In the Agreement of Purchase and Sale the Society promised to maintain the Property as a heritage property in accordance with its heritage designation and applicable heritage preservation legislation and agreed that HRM can reacquire the Property pursuant to the same terms and conditions as contained in the Buy-Back Agreement:

"Repurchase of the Property

11. In the event that the Purchaser:

- (i) ceases the beneficial activity for which the Council of the Halifax Regional Municipality gave its consideration to a less than market value sale of the Property pursuant to subsection 63(1) of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter;*
- (ii) discontinues the operations of the Society;*
- (iii) is in default of any loan or financial instrument secured by title to the Property;*
- (iv) wishes to consider the sale or conveyance of the Property; or*

(v) is in default of the terms and conditions of this Buy-Back Agreement

the Municipality may, at its sole discretion, have the right to repurchase the Property at a price set out in Section E.

E. Repurchase Price of the Property

12. In the event that the Purchaser is unable to proceed with re-development of the Property as an arts incubator and cultural hub within 24 months of the date of closing the Agreement of Purchase and Sale the Municipality may repurchase the Property for the sum of One Dollar (\$1.00).

13. In the event that the Purchaser undertakes re-development of the Property as an arts incubator and cultural hub, and the Municipality elects to repurchase the Property pursuant to some action necessitated under Section D, the repurchase price for the Property shall be the appraised value of the Property as at the date of such repurchase as determined by an independent appraiser, less the land value, less any municipal contribution in any form, or any payment made by the Municipality to cover default under the Purchaser's financing and less the appraised value of the Building as of the Closing Date of this Agreement."

The right and process for the repurchase is set forth in the Agreement of Purchase and Sale as follows:

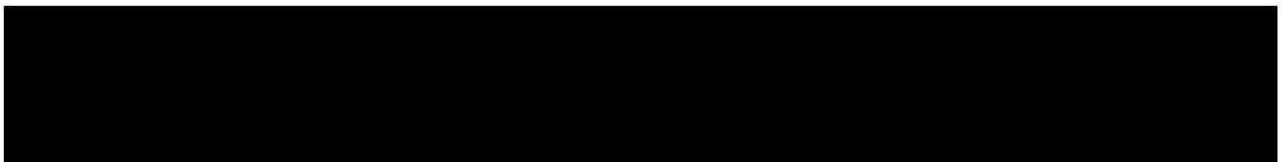


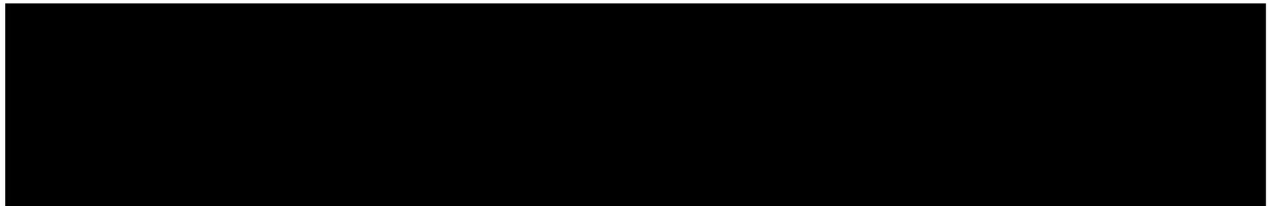
Due to its admitted inability to take any action to redevelop the property in the first two years following the purchase, late in 2020 TASS applied to HRM for an extension of an additional year to end on November 30, 2021, within which to proceed.



It appears that no redevelopment activities were conducted by TASS other than a removal of part of the asbestos in 2023 - 2024. In March 2025 TASS indicated that there was still abatement of hazardous materials to be completed.

As little progress has been made [redacted] staff are recommending invoking the terms of the Buy-Back Agreement. There is significant risk (both liability and reputational) associated with letting a heritage building sit vacant for this amount of time with no insurance and no clear, feasible path to operation. The building remains unoccupied, uninsured, and not operational.





Facility Maintenance and Operations have provided a high-level cost estimate of \$35,000 per year to hold this as a vacant building for HRM. Holding costs do not include any physical repairs to the building and if emergency repairs were required, these costs would be in addition to the estimated \$35,000. Further to this, Facility Design & Construction estimates that the cost to restore the building to useable or leasable space would be \$12,000,000 (rough order of magnitude estimate based on a review of previous building condition assessment and structural review reports from over 10 years ago). There is no municipal use identified for the asset and the restoration amount is not within the municipality's 10-year capital plan. With the building's relatively small amount of potentially rentable or useable area it is very unlikely that an economic market rent would be sufficient to service the debt for the restoration work.

Planning & Development Context

Any potential redevelopment of 1588 Barrington Street is subject to both heritage and planning approvals.

The subject property is a municipally registered heritage property, and it's located in the Barrington Street Heritage Conservation District (HCD). As a contributing heritage resource within the district, any alterations, additions, and new development proposals shall be reviewed by the Heritage Planner to ensure alignment with the *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* (2nd Edition) and the intent of the HCD Plan. If the proposal preserves the HCD's heritage value, a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued for the proposed work.

The property is also regulated by the [Downtown Halifax Plan and Land Use By-law](#) (including the Design Manual). As such, the owner can seek as-of-right or site plan approval development opportunities, which includes a variety of commercial, residential, and cultural uses. Any redevelopment options are limited to a maximum height of 22 metres. The heritage development agreement policy is not an option for this property, as it's within an HCD. The Downtown Halifax Plan and By-law is anticipated to be reduced in size and replaced with the Regional Centre Plan & By-law through the Downtown Halifax HCD package of amendments, with adoption anticipated in the spring of 2026.

Conclusion

The TASS funding request represents an opportunity to support the local arts sector and provide an accessible venue and cultural programming that is otherwise lacking throughout the Municipality. However, the ask does not meet the criteria that would otherwise support a successful funding request for a project of this scale. At face value the project aligns well with municipal priorities and the need for culture space remains high but without a sound business plan backed by proof of concept and capacity and/or confirmed funding from other orders of government or the private sector, staff are not able to recommend the request be granted. If other funding was secured, there would be a stronger case for some support but at this time the building sits vacant and vulnerable, and the investment requested from HRM does not see the building into operation but rather funds towards further conceptual redevelopment.

TASS has been in receipt of significant municipal funding including conveyance of the building (valued at \$1,498,600) for the sum of \$1.00, a contribution towards abatement and carrying costs (\$250,000) and tax relief for seven years (\$227,397) while being unoccupied and not operational, a total municipal investment valued at \$1,975,997. Staff do not recommend unprecedented municipal support while the building is not operational and the proposal does not meet the standard of evaluation for funding. To avoid further deterioration of the building invoking the Buy-Back Agreement would allow the Municipality to regain control and momentum on the project and move forward with Council's goal to bring this building back to life.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the recommendation, the following cost will be incurred

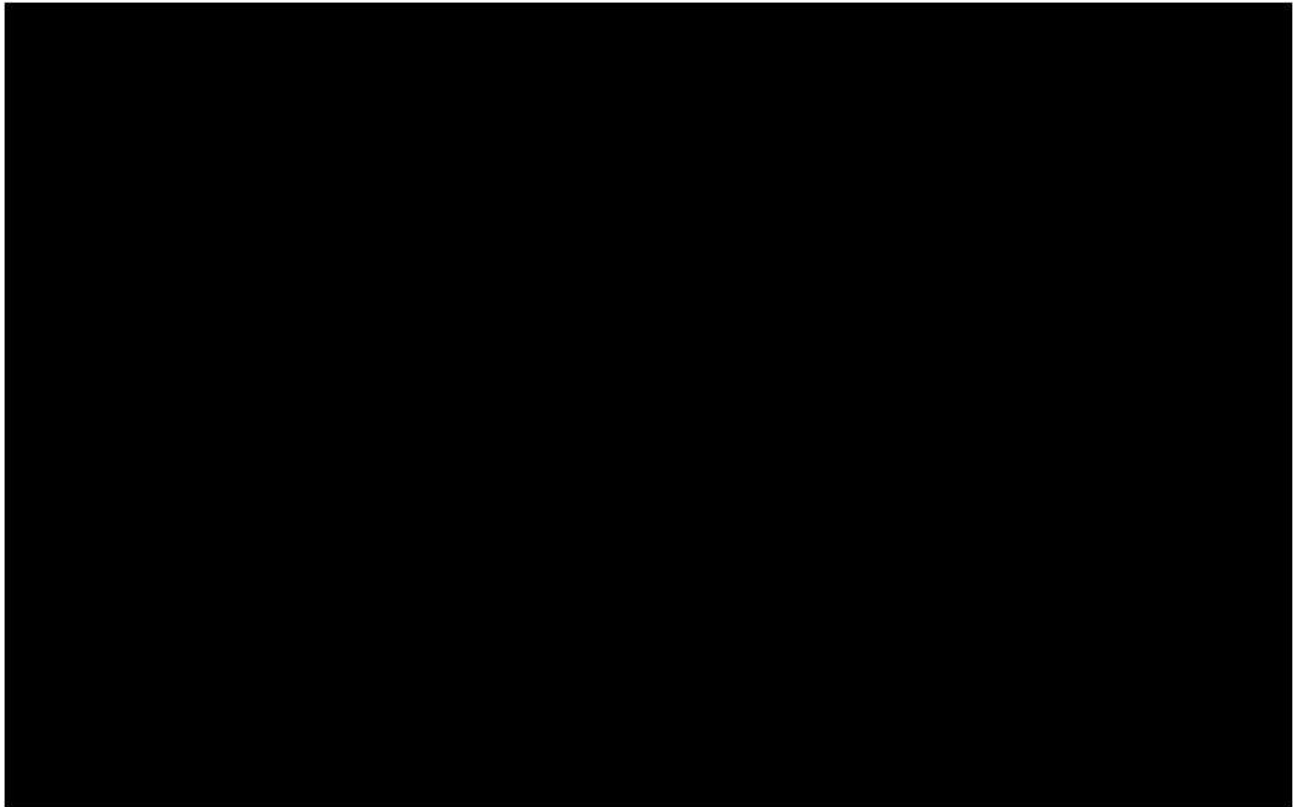
1. Buy-back cost (as per buy-back agreement)	\$1.00*
2. Surplus building holding cost [REDACTED] annually)	\$35,000.00
Total	\$35,001.00

[REDACTED]

In the event that additional costs arise beyond those outlined in the agreement, they will be assessed and managed as they are identified. The report will be returned to Audit & Finance Standing Committee for review if new costs are identified.

RISK CONSIDERATION

[REDACTED]



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

A breach of asbestos-containing plaster was documented by an independent assessment and disclosed in the formal Call for Submissions. Regional Council approved a grant of up to \$225,000 for remediation as per a Contribution Agreement signed by both parties.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could choose to:

1. Direct the Acting Chief Administrative Officer to return to Council with a recommended funding amount, in the 2026/27 municipal budget, subject to a signed Contribution Agreement. There is no funding allocated for this as part of the draft 2026/27 budget. If Council were to direct staff to provide operational funding, it would be required to come forward as a BAL item for debate as part of the 2026/27 budget.
2. Defer funding decision pending official confirmation from TASS on status of the [REDACTED] Federal funding decision.
 - a. If federal funding is confirmed, direct the Chief Administrative Officer to return to Council with a recommended funding amount based on eligibility and precedence subject to a signed Contribution Agreement;
3. Decline funding and defer initiating the Buy-Back Agreement pending official confirmation from TASS on status of the [REDACTED] Federal funding decision.

4. Decline funding to the Society and not invoke the Buy-Back Agreement, retaining status quo.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c. 39

- 7A The purposes of the municipality are to
- (a) provide good government;
 - (b) provide services, facilities, and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality; and
 - (c) develop and maintain safe and viable communities

- 79A (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if
- (a) the expenditure is included in the municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the municipality;
 - (b) the expenditure is in respect of an emergency under the Emergency Management Act; or
 - (c) the expenditure is legally required to be paid.

(2) The Municipality may expend money provided for in an operating budget or capital budget for a purpose other than that set out in the operating budget or capital budget for that fiscal year if the expenditure does not affect the total of the amounts estimated for the operating budget and the capital budget.

61 (1) The Municipality may acquire and own property granted or conveyed to the Municipality either absolutely or in trust for a public or charitable purpose.

(2) Where property is conveyed to the Municipality in trust for a public or charitable purpose, the Municipality holds the property according to the terms of the trust and may do anything necessary to carry out the objects of the trust.

(3) The property vested in the Municipality, absolutely or in trust, is under the exclusive management and control of the Council, unless an Act of the Legislature provides otherwise.

- (5) The Municipality may
- (a) acquire property, including property outside the Municipality, that the Municipality requires for its purposes or for the use of the public;
 - (b) sell property at market value when the property is no longer required for the purposes of the Municipality;

Power of Council regarding property with vacant building

62 (1) In this Section, "vacant building" does not include a seasonal dwelling.

(2) The Council may acquire a property that contains a vacant building if the building is boarded up for a period of time that exceeds the length of time that it may be boarded up under a by-law made pursuant to subclause 188(1)(k)(iii).

(3) Before deciding to acquire a property under subsection (2), the Council shall provide seven days' notice in writing to the owner, setting out the date, time and place of the meeting at which the decision to acquire the property will be discussed, and the owner must be given an opportunity to appear and be heard before any order is made.

(4) Notice under subsection (3) must be provided by service upon the owner or by posting the notice in a conspicuous place upon the property.

(5) Where the owner refuses to sell the property, the Council may exercise the power of expropriation under Section 65 to acquire the property.

Heritage Property Act. R.S., c. 199

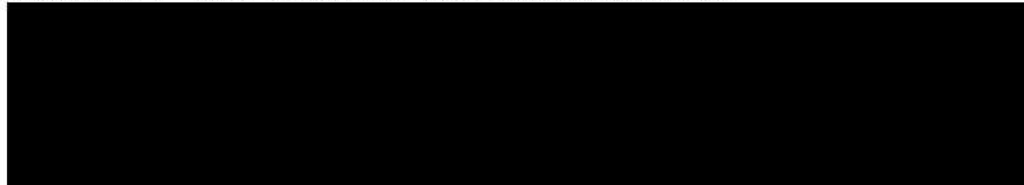
11 (1) Provincial heritage property shall not be substantially altered in exterior or public-building interior appearance or demolished without the approval of the Governor in Council.

12 (1) A municipality may by by-law establish a municipal registry of heritage property.
oval to alter or demolish municipal heritage property.

17 (1) Municipal heritage property shall not be substantially altered in exterior or public-building interior appearance or demolished without the approval of the municipality.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – 2025 TASS CPED Presentation and Handout



Report Prepared by: Kellie McIvor Acting Director Strategic Planning and Design, Parks and Recreation

[REDACTED]
Lindsay Cory, Community Developer Public Art, Parks and Recreation, [REDACTED]
Peta-Jane Temple, Team Lead Grants & Contributions, Finance & Asset Management,
[REDACTED]

March 2025

Impact Strategy Summary

HRM Community Planning
and Economic Development
Standing Committee

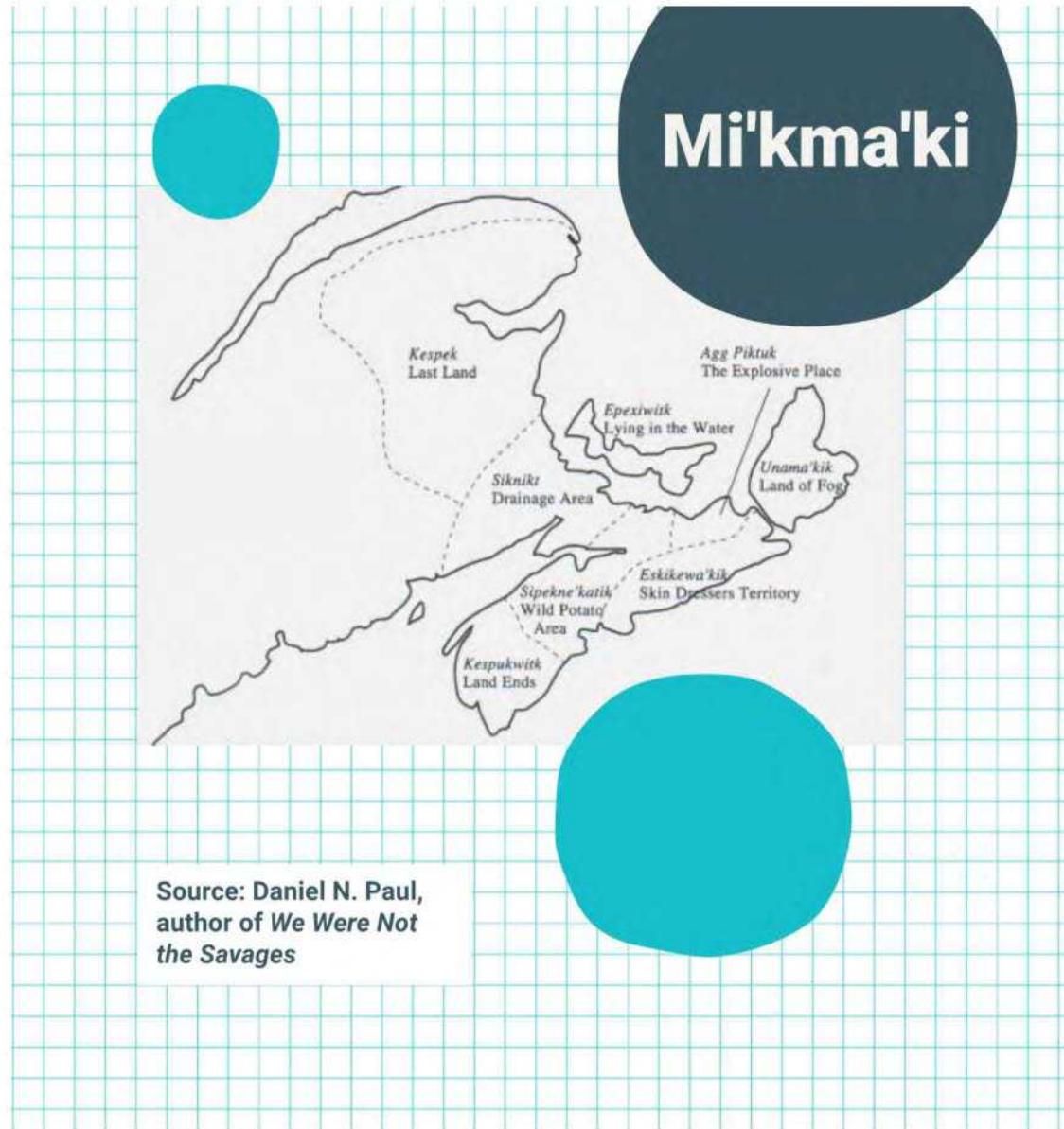
TURRET ARTS SPACE

2025 - Turret, Pitch Outline
Impact Strategy (version 19)
CPED Report

Mi'kma'ki is the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq Nation.

This territory is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship between the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik Nations and the British Crown, first signed in 1725, which sets out enduring obligations for all of us.

The Turret Arts Space embraces its role as a participant in these treaties and strives to build good relations.



The new **Turret Arts Space** will house a critically engaged community where youth, artists, and the public can connect and thrive in a space that is **physically, economically, and culturally accessible**

Our Purpose

To transform social hierarchies and support participation in artistic culture and society.





Values:

**Creativity and
Experimentation**

Accessibility

Co-operation



Our Role and Responsibility

LANDLORD

- A **sustainable economic model** with a 20-year horizon
- **Facilities management**
- Two critical arts and social purpose charities as **Anchor Tenants with protected rental rates** (less than 50% of market rent in downtown Halifax)
- One **commercial café tenant**
- Many **community rentals** for office and event space

PROGRAMS

- **Turret Learning Center: professional development, workshops, one-on-one art management services**
- **Public Presentations:** exhibitions, art installations, and performances, throughout the building and virtually.
- **Artistic Residencies:** through the multi-disciplinary Art Studio.
- **Public Art:** indoor and outdoor galleries

STEWARD

- **Queer Heritage Interpretive Site:** permanent and rotating art exhibitions expressing themes of the Queer Heritage of 1588 Barrington Street



Anchor Tenants and Community

The Khyber Centre for the Arts

ANNUALLY over 2000 audience members

- over 30 public events
- 6 exhibitions
- 3 residencies
- Publications, virtual events, and workshops



Leave Out Violence Nova Scotia

ANNUALLY over 300 youth participants

- Programming that serves youth in HRM, Sipekne'katik First Nations, Membertou First Nations, Dartmouth, and Preston
- One-on-One Support as well as a **24/7 On-Call Crisis Support Services**

Greater
than
anything

E
>
LO



Turret, The Khyber, LOVE NS all have mandates which service the 2SLGBTQIA+ community

Expertise, Diligence, Perseverance

- Team of **expert consultants**, each with 10-20 years of experience
- **Co-operative Public Funding Strategy**
- **Governance Framework Model**
- High-level **Operational, Programming, and Revenue Model**
- **Proforma and Financial Model** showing economic feasibility for a 20-year horizon
- Initiating engagement with **Queer heritage knowledge keepers**
- **Branding and Marketing**
- **Accessible and inclusive design**
- **Functional Program, Schematic Design, Design Development**
- **Class 'D', 'C' and 'B' Cost Estimates**
- **Partial abatement of Hazardous Materials** to make the building 'Safe to Enter'

TURRET ARTS SPACE

Economic Collaboration

\$1 million raised for Design, Planning, and Preliminary Abatement of Hazardous Materials

Funded by Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canadian Heritage, Community Business Development Corporation, Halifax Regional Municipality, and Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

Canada 

 NOVA SCOTIA

HALIFAX



TURRET ARTS SPACE

Impact Alignment

HALIFAX

- **SHARING OUR STORIES** The Halifax Regional Municipality's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan 2023
- **People.Planet.Prosperty** Halifax's Inclusive Economic Strategy 2022-27
- **Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan 2021** (HRM, ACOA, Discover Halifax)
- **2022-2024 Youth Service Plan** "A Strategic Vision for Youth Services" (HRM)
- **Halifax Strategic Priorities** 2021-25



*Turret Arts Space is named in Downtown Halifax Business Commission **Vision 2030** and the new **Integrated Tourism Master Plan 2030** (Discover Halifax, HRM, ACOA) scheduled for completion in 2025.*





TURRET ARTS SPACE

Art reflects, defines, and influences the society and culture from which it emerges. Art is not a luxury but a catalyst for change. Systemic injustices, such as colonization, ablism, and white supremacy, negatively impact the fabric of society, including the arts and culture sector, in an attempt to sustain profit over people.

An Urgent Need for Expansion in the Arts, Culture and Social Spaces

PROBLEM 1:

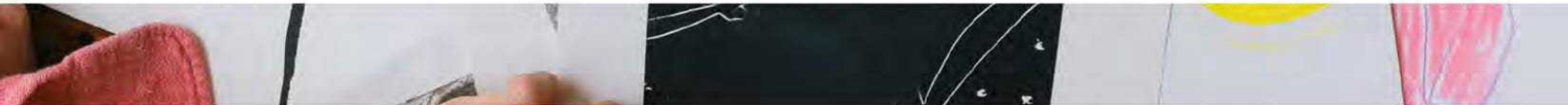
Public commemorations have ignored deserving histories, discouraging community participation

PROBLEM 2:

Arts and culture workers are left behind by the systems that should support them

PROBLEM 3:

Downtown Halifax is growing at an unprecedented rate, but the cultural spaces that create community are disappearing



TURRET ARTS SPACE

Cumulative Effect

→ Nova Scotia's productivity trails the rest of North America...

GDP per Capita in 2022



Trevor Tombe, "As productivity plunges, Ontario and Alabama now have the same per capita GDP," *The Hub*, commentary, 15 June 2023

TURRET ARTS SPACE

PROBLEM 1: Downtown Halifax is growing at an unprecedented rate, but the cultural spaces that create community are disappearing

LAST FIVE YEARS



Hussey, Greenberg, Robinson, Sichel, 2023. Economic and Cultural Impact Assessment for Turret Arts Space Society

NEXT FIVE YEARS



Downtown Halifax Business Commission, 2023. State of the Downtown 2023 Report

NEXT TEN YEARS



Downtown Halifax Business Commission, 2023. State of the Downtown 2023 Report

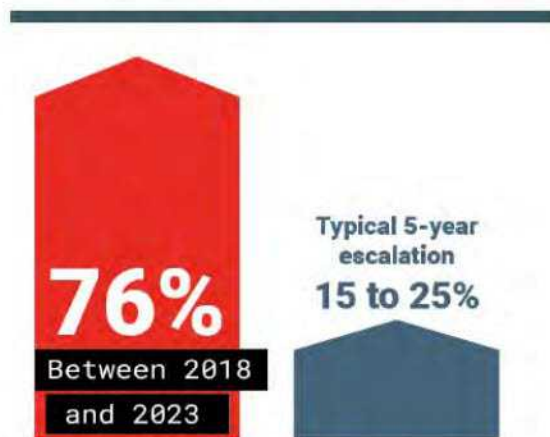
TURRET ARTS SPACE

PROBLEM 1: Downtown Halifax is growing at an unprecedented rate, but the cultural spaces that create community are disappearing

INVENTORY OF EXISTING ARTS AND CULTURE SPACES

- Largely **physically or economically inaccessible**
- Largely **not of a professional quality**
- **Deficit is recognized** by HRM, Province, Discover Halifax, and Downtown Halifax Business Commission

UNPRECEDENTED CONSTRUCTION COST ESCALATION IN HRM



Estimated by Cost Consultant, QSolv, May 2022

→ **Population growth needs cultural growth to maintain healthy quality of life**

TURRET ARTS SPACE

PROBLEM 2: Arts and culture workers are left behind by the systems that should support them

→ ***There is a Provincial deficit in the economic contribution of the cultural sector***

2021 Cultural Products Per Capita



Trade of Culture and Sport Products Report (TCSP, 2021)

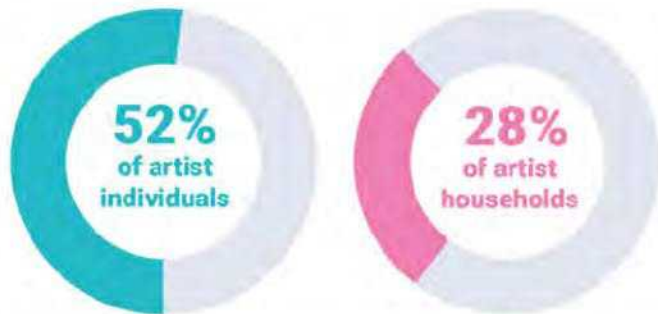
Cultural products are defined as art, films, music, crafts and broadcasting

TURRET ARTS SPACE

PROBLEM 2: Arts and culture workers are left behind by the systems that should support them

Cycles of poverty

NOVA SCOTIAN ARTISTS



are below the poverty line

2018 poverty threshold, 120 Professional Nova Scotian Artists Surveyed, Sept 2020

MEDIAN TOTAL INCOME IN NOVA SCOTIA

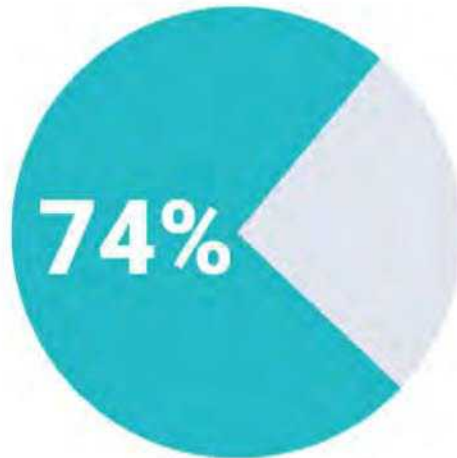


2021 Census

PROBLEM 2: Arts and culture workers are left behind by the systems that should support them

RESULTS FROM THE ARTISTS IN MIND SURVEY

Those who have **worked as artists** in Nova Scotia that have at some point **needed mental health supports**.



Visual Arts Nova Scotia, 2022, 313 respondents

What challenges most affected their wellbeing and mental health?



PROBLEM 3: Public commemorations have ignored deserving histories, which deters community participation

Built Heritage needs a **tremendous amount of care** and planning to effectively activate.

Important histories from **equity-seeking communities** have not yet been narrated **publicly**.

Maintained informally through **oral story-telling** and **decentralized and personal archives**.

Stories of activation *against exclusion*, **are being excluded.**



PROBLEM 3: Public commemorations have ignored deserving histories, which deters community participation

1969

Homosexuality partially decriminalized in Canada

Queer community members living in Nova Scotia still had **no protections** under the Human Rights Act

1972

Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE) is formed

GAE sets up GayLine **helpline service** and begins political activation

1976

First GAE disco held at 1588 Barrington Street

Halifax social **establishments shunned queer patrons** so GAE created friendly, non-oppressive meeting place for gays and lesbians in the city

1976-1982

The Turret Club hosts discos, drag and variety shows, buffet dinners, GAE meetings, and "Turret Cinema" movie nights

A place run "**by and for the gay community.**" 25% of Turret Club profits funded GAE and the remaining 75% was banked towards the goal of developing a queer community centre

The Turret Club was "iconic" and "famous across Canada," but its pivotal history has no public or site-specific commemoration.

“

TURRET ARTS SPACE

“Queer spaces in the 1970s were rare: usually controlled by others, seeking profit rather than self-respect. The Turret Club was a gathering space for all genders, run by a diverse grass-roots organisation funding political and social services. It was remarkable, not just locally, but nationally and internationally: an almost unique example of community self-empowerment. The same building housed a Queer bookstore and health services to gay men during the AIDS crisis. Four decades on, people remember the Turret Club like a lost loved one. It had a beat, and you could dance to it.”

Robin Metcalfe

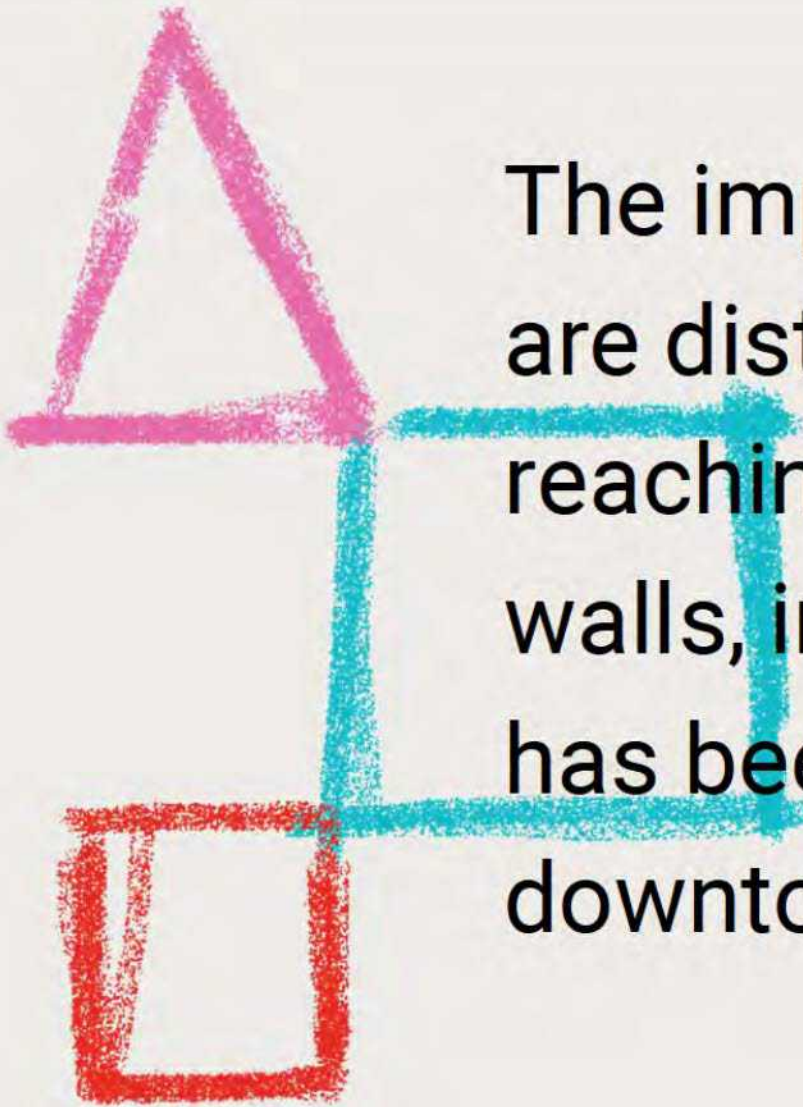
Independent Writer, Curator,
and Queer Community Historian

Former Chairperson of the Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE) and member of the Turret Management Committee of the GAE

Former Chair of the Executive Committee for The Khyber Arts Society (now The Khyber Centre for the Arts)

Founding President of the 1588 Barrington Building Preservation Society (now the Turret Arts Space Society)

Former member of Friends of the Khyber



The impacts of Turret Arts Space are distinct, dynamic, and reaching beyond the four heritage walls, instilling a life force that has been missing from Halifax's downtown core.

TURRET ARTS SPACE

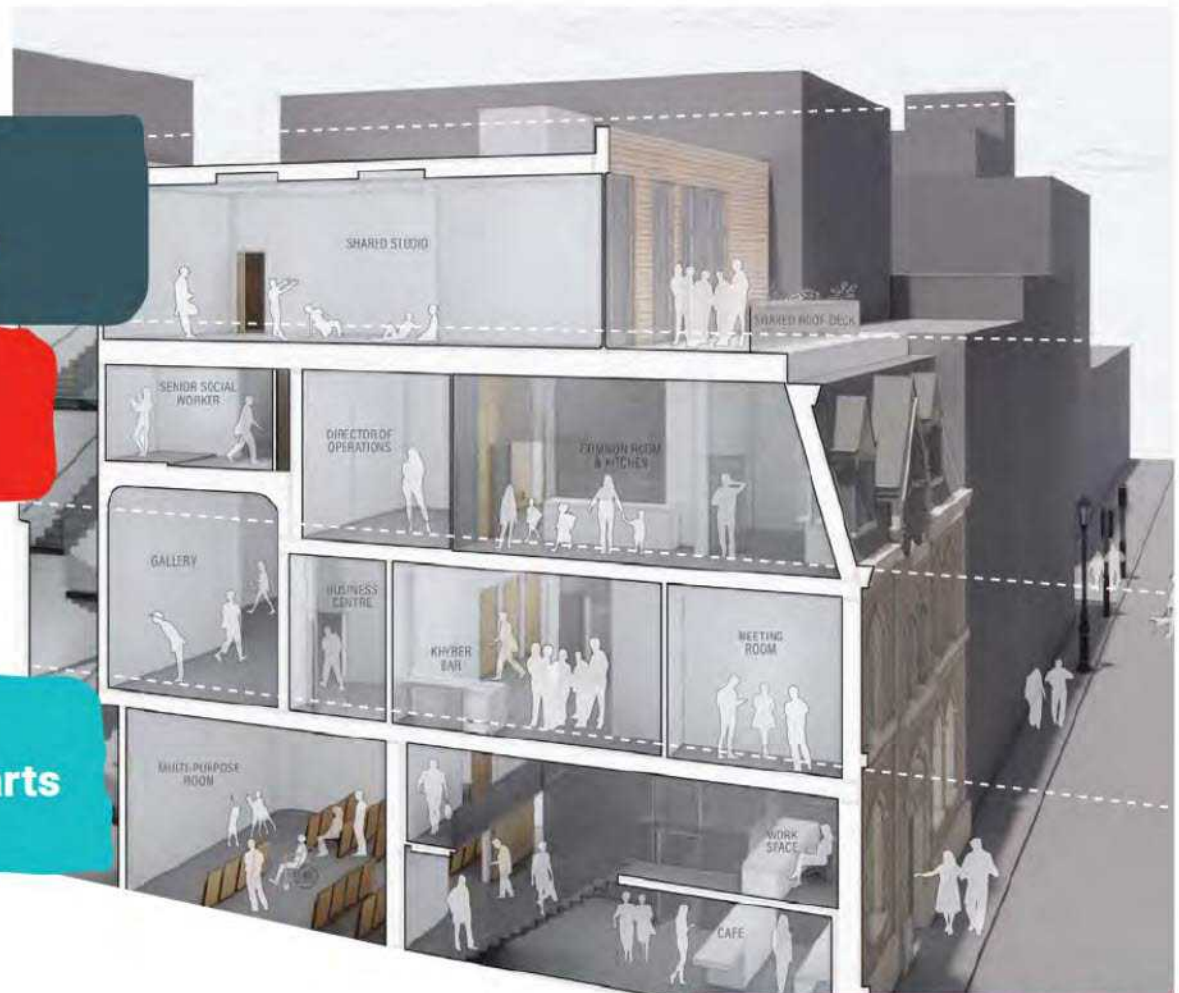
4th Floor: Turret Internationally recognized Artist Residency Program

3rd Floor: Leave Out Violence Nova Scotia (LOVE NS)

2nd Floor: The Khyber Centre for the Arts

1st Floor: Broad exposure to the arts

Turret is developing a vision for each floor.



Schematic Rendering:
Abbott Brown Architects

Impact: What We Do

01  Art

02 Mentorship

03 Public

PROBLEM 1: Downtown Halifax is growing at an unprecedented rate, but the cultural spaces that create community are disappearing

RESPONSE: Turret Arts Space provides an accessible cultural hub that attracts artists, youth, and visitors of all ages to Halifax.

1A. Strengthen
the Dynamism of
Downtown

1B. Contribute to
Economic Growth

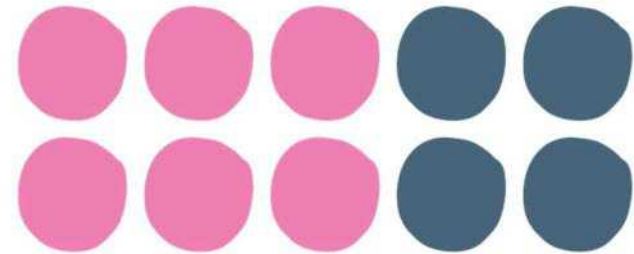
1A. Strengthen the Dynamism of Downtown

CONNECTIVE CORRIDOR

- Art Gallery of Nova Scotia,
- NSCAD University,
- Dalhousie University Arts Centre,
- Saint Mary's University Art Gallery

DEVELOPMENT OF AN ARTS DISTRICT

DOWNTOWN POPULATION GROWTH ALIGNS WITH TURRET'S TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC



60% of the downtown population is between the ages of 15 and 34

*Downtown Halifax Business Commission, 2023.
State of the Downtown 2023 Report*

People aged 15-34 were more likely to spend more money on arts and culture than other age groups, following the height of pandemic restrictions

Hill Strategies, 2021. Public engagement in the arts emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic: Canadian analysis and regional differences

1B. Contribute to Economic Growth

The Turret Arts Space is a **generator for arts, culture, professional development, creative industry, and leadership** – driving vitality, impact, and economic growth



PEOPLE.PLANET.PROSPERITY.
HALIFAX'S INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC
STRATEGY, 2022-2027

5 YEARS:

Grow GDP to **\$25 billion**

Increase population to **525,000**

Grow the labour force to **310,000**

15-YEARS:

Grow GDP to **\$32 billion**

Increase population to **650,000**

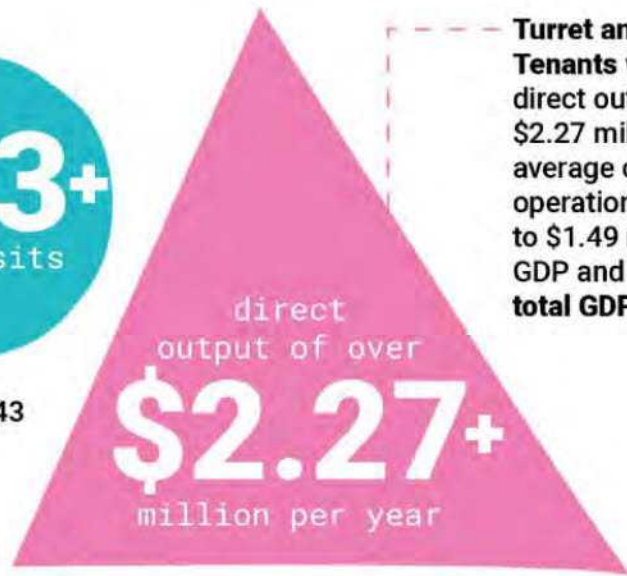
1B. Contribute to Economic Growth

TURRET ECONOMIC IMPACT DATA HIGHLIGHTS

Turret Arts Space will have an estimated 233 daily visits, or **72,704 visits each year.**



An estimated 43 total full-time jobs will be sustained.



Turret and its Anchor Tenants will produce direct output of over \$2.27 million per year, on average over 6 years of operation. This equates to \$1.49 million in direct GDP and **\$2.41 million in total GDP, per year.**



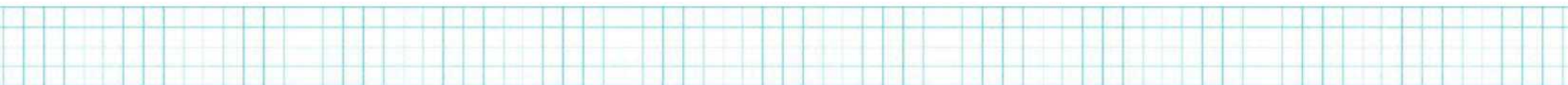
Indirect and induced GDP make up almost \$1 million of total annual GDP from this initiative, which **shows the trickle impact the Turret Arts Space** will have on the surrounding and related communities.

PROBLEM 2: Arts and culture workers are left behind by the systems that should support them

RESPONSE: Turret Arts Space drives economic impact through the culture sector by building artists' livelihoods.

2A. Generate,
Attract, Retain
and Develop
Talent

2B. Increase
Exportability of
Arts and Culture



2A. Generate, Attract, Retain, and Develop Talent

The full life cycle of
the artist is supported

The goal?

Artistic Livelihood

- **Underserved and at-risk youth** enter through LOVE NS
- **Emerging artists** enter through The Khyber, locally, nationally, and internationally
- **Established artists** enter through the internationally recognized artist residency program
- The Turret Arts Space Learning Centre brings **opportunities for skills-building, knowledge sharing, and overall support.**

2B. Increase Exportability of Arts and Culture

- **Exportability of artwork is a career-defining milestone** for an artist, increasing the value of their work and giving them access to new funding sources.
- **Importing internationally recognized artists** through the residency program connects the region to an international network.
- Local artists are exposed to international work, building authentic connections and relationships, **expanding the network for exportability**.
- Operational Service Provider IOTA Studios / Institute brings **experience with international import / export**



Exports

National
Average

\$478.11
per capita

Nova Scotia

\$135.00
per capita

(TCSP, 2021)

PROBLEM 3: Public commemorations have ignored deserving histories, which deters community participation

RESPONSE: Turret Arts Space aims to designate 1588 Barrington as Canada's first Queer Heritage Site and set a national precedent for stewardship.

3A. Stewardship
of Queer Heritage

3B. Build and
Enhance Key
Demand Generators

3A. Stewardship of Queer Heritage

HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan SHARING OUR STORIES

→ **STEWARDSHIP: protection and nurturing of culture and heritage assets, tangible and intangible.**

The ACTION PLAN includes:

EMPOWERING COMMUNITY

Identification, commemoration and celebration of 2SLGBTQIA+ history and landmarks

CO-CREATION

Improve heritage conservation support for a more diverse range of cultures

Turret is seeking co-creative partnerships with heritage agencies

3A. Stewardship of Queer Heritage

The Queer Heritage Concept Plan is under development, subject to thorough public consultation in the next project phase. The Team:

- **Robin Metcalfe** – founding President of the Turret Arts Space Society, former President of the Gay Alliance for Equality, curator, writer, researcher, archivist, and cultural activist.
- **Emily Davidson** – current Director and former President of Turret Arts Space Society, artist, writer, researcher, designer, and activist.
- **Chris Cochrane** – youth worker, educator, trans activist, public speaker, performance and drag artist
- **Margot Durling** – Brand and Space Designer, multi-disciplinary transgender artist, musician, performer
- **Excel Garay and Hannah Guinan** – co-Directors, Khyber Centre for the Arts

CONSULTATION BY IOTA Institute / Studios

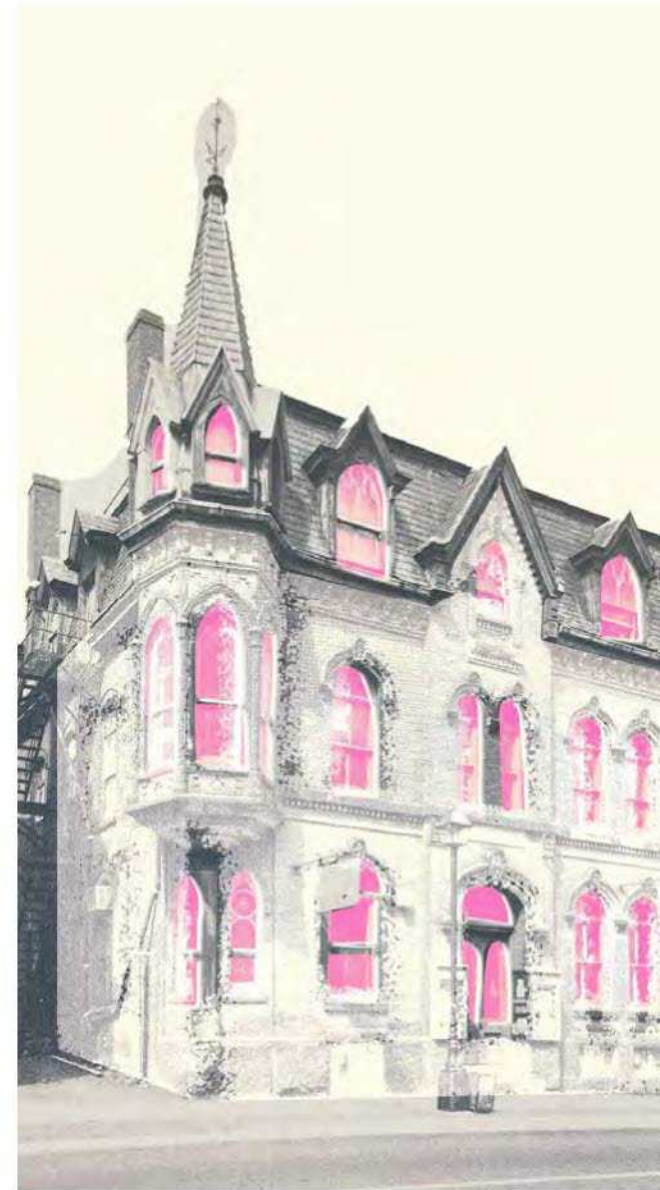
“The centre would be a place that, as the (Turret) pamphlet says, would “let all Nova Scotians know that we, the gay people of Nova Scotia, are taking our rightful place in the community, open and proud of our special identity.”

Excerpt from *Before the Parade* by Rebecca Rose, Chapter 5 – THE TURRET: A SPACE OF THEIR OWN

3B. Build and Enhance Key Demand Generators

The Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan identifies **placemaking as a catalyst** for economic development, and “the stronger the meaning, the better the place”

(co-created by HRM, ACOA, Discover Halifax, 2021)



3B. Build and Enhance Key Demand Generators

- **Includes iconic and historical places**
- **Adaptive re-use** of a culturally significant property and ensures an active future
- Maximized engagement: **all seasons**, day and evening, intersectional, intergenerational

Aligned with:

Arts District

Interpretive Master Plan

Cultural Facilities Plan

Public Art Master Plan

We will always be seen, heard, and accessible, through safety, inclusivity, and affordability, in a prime location to serve HRM.

TURRET ARTS SPACE

Dedication, Perseverance, and Sacrifice

Sweat equity and personal donation by the Turret Board has kept this project progressing.

Emily Davidson has been volunteering to the tune of \$50K per year of labour, for 10 years.



Photo: I'thandi Munro

Risks to the Solution

- Need to engage with the growth of the downtown, **or lose it**
- Unprecedented cost escalation exacerbates all issues:
THE TIME IS NOW
- Funding delays lose cost efficiencies and **threaten team momentum**
- Potential simultaneous **elections**
- **Risk losing a heritage asset!! Environmental impacts** from unprecedented flooding events put the building at risk if left vacant
- The Anchor Tenants are key, established, cultural pillars but their **premises are lacking economic and physical accessibility**
- **Losing the opportunity** to set a precedent and show real cultural leadership in stewarding Queer Heritage

Economic Collaboration

Project leverages **FEDERAL INVESTMENT** and **ACTIVATES PRIVATE INVESTMENT** across many critical community interests.

Financial Model shows how Turret can be **sustainable and thrive over a 20-year horizon with a blend of non-profit and profitable activities**



TURRET ARTS SPACE

Economic Collaboration

Turret's economic model protects rental rates for **two critical arts and social purpose** charities for 20 years

Anchor Tenant rental rate is **less than 50% of market rent** in downtown Halifax

Greater
than
anything

LOVE



Economic Collaboration

TOTAL BUDGET BREAKDOWN

- Construction Documents, Complete Abatement, Governance and Program Planning: **\$1.2 million**
- Operationalization Bridge Funding, to get to full Operating Revenues and Funding: **\$2 million**
- Queer Heritage Interpretation and Implementation: **\$300k**
- Shell, Structure, and Major Accessibility Interventions: **\$6 million**
- Systems, Interiors, and Equipment: **\$9 million**



Request to HRM



1. INVESTMENT OF \$1.5 MILLION

To get to Construction Tender “shovel ready” with a complete Operationalization Plan and Business Case, ready for implementation	\$1,221,000
Complete Hazardous Materials Abatement, Site Security, Site Preparation, Insurance	\$233,000
Construction Documents and Interpretive Heritage Planning	\$380,000
Operationalization Planning and Funding Strategy	\$240,000
Communications and Marketing	\$35,000
Project Management and Strategic Planning	\$100,000
Legal, Accounting, Procurement Planning	\$45,000
Contingency/Risk (10%), Discounted Tax (7.5%)	\$188,000
Operating Support while in-process (2024/2025, 2025/2026, 2026/2027 - Property Tax, Insurance, Interim Building Protection), with immediate injection of \$50k	\$150,000
Collaboration with HRM to develop Queer Heritage Designation Pilot and Building Ownership Model	\$130,000

Request to HRM



2. CO-CREATION PARTNERSHIP TO SET PRECEDENT FOR STEWARDSHIP OF QUEER HERITAGE

Designate and interpret 1588 Barrington Street as the first Queer Heritage Site in Canada:

- HRM relief of Property Tax (already in place)
- Partnership for 100% of building maintenance
- **\$80k investment** (included in previous table) for the Turret Arts Space and team of researchers, community members, and consultants to **collaborate with HRM**
- Time and effort investment to collaborate on a pilot project to **set a national precedent**
- Completed in time for **Halifax to host Canada Pride, July 2027**
- **Maximize access to Federal funding programs** through Municipal partnership

Request to HRM

3. DEVELOP A BUILDING OWNERSHIP SOLUTION



- Collaborate with Turret Arts Space Society to find the **most strategic and sustainable building ownership model**
- Consider the **two critical Anchor Tenants** and their future growth
- Consider creative solutions from **cities with a variety of cultural assets**
- **\$50k investment** (included in previous table) for the Turret Arts Space and team of researchers, consultants, and Anchor Tenants, to collaborate with HRM

Request to HRM

TIMELINE: CONCURRENT SEGMENTS



6 months

Design, hazardous materials abatement, tender

With a successful funding strategy, construction could begin in Fall 2025, making the building ready to open for Canada Pride 2027 in HALIFAX!!

Operationalization Planning and Funding Strategy, Communications and Marketing, Legal, Accounting, Procurement Planning

12 months



Key Letters of Support



- Downtown Halifax Business Commission
- Discover Halifax
- Association of Nova Scotia Museums
- Former MP, Halifax, Andy Fillmore (current Mayor of Halifax)
- MLA, Halifax Citadel – Sable Island, Lisa Lachance
- MLA, Dartmouth North, Sue Leblanc
- Khyber Centre for the Arts
- Leave Out Violence Nova Scotia
- Prismatic Arts Festival, neighbouring resident company at Neptune Theatre

August 2024

To Whom it May Concern,

Downtown Halifax Business Commission (DHBC) wishes to offer its full support to the Turret Arts Space Society and its comprehensive plan for the redevelopment of 1588 Barrington Street (formerly "The Khyber").

DHBC represents the collective voice of 1600 businesses and landlords in Downtown Halifax, the economic, cultural, and historical heartbeat of Atlantic Canada. We focus on the 4 areas of advocacy, marketing & communication, membership engagement, and placemaking.

For generations, the Khyber has been the centrepiece of Barrington Street, and this was reinforced in 2009's Heritage Conservation District, when the iconic turret literally became the poster child for a revitalized Barrington Street, the heart of Downtown.

DHBC, with consultation from hundreds of stakeholders, experts, and the public, launched Downtown Halifax Vision 2030, which articulated 4 transformational moves, and 17 recommendations to take our urban core in a bold new direction. The work of the Turret Arts Space Society is perfectly aligned with this vision. In particular, a focus on arts and culture, sustainability, diversity, and historic preservation, are epitomized in their plans.

This important project is critical to the future of Halifax as not only a cultural destination, but as a major supporting entity for the artistic livelihood of Halifax's many talented artists and artistic professionals, present and future.

Sincerely,

Redacted

Paul MacKinnon
CEO
Downtown Halifax Business Commission

1588 BARRINGTON STREET, SUITE 104, HALIFAX, NS B3J 3X7
P (902) 423-0658, F (902) 429-0865
info@downtownhalifax.ca
www.downtownhalifax.ca



CIBC Building
1809 Barrington Street, Suite 1004
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
B3J 3K8
discoverhalifaxns.com

August 29, 2024

RE: Support for the redevelopment of 1588 Barrington Street ("the Khyber") building.

Dear Turret Arts Space Society & Potential Funding Partners,

Discover Halifax supports and recognizes the potential of the Turret Arts Space Society's redevelopment project at 1588 Barrington Street (the "Khyber Building"). Their vision of a vibrant, multi-faceted cultural hub aligns with several of Discover Halifax's key objectives, including support for a dynamic arts scene, heritage conservation, and inclusivity.

The Khyber Building holds deep significance for Halifax's LGBTQ+ community. In the 1970s and 1980s, it was home to the Gay Alliance for Equality, which operated the Turret club, a pivotal space for the queer community. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the Khyber became a vital hub for the city's arts and music scenes, managed by the Khyber Arts Society. It hosted numerous exhibitions and performances by iconic artists and musicians. The redevelopment will honour this legacy through an interpretive installation, ensuring this part of Halifax's queer history is celebrated and shared with future generations while maintaining the use of the building as a critical gathering place, a centre of creation, and ensuring its future as a hub of creativity, culture, and community.

At Discover Halifax, we are committed to enhancing demand generators for arts, entertainment, and heritage conservation. Projects like the Turret Arts Space play an integral role in advancing these goals. By fostering creativity and providing spaces for diverse communities, including the LGBTQ+ community, to celebrate their identities and heritage, this initiative contributes to Halifax's tourism landscape.

Our 2019 Halifax Regional Integrated Tourism Master Plan (ITMP) has guided tourism growth and economic success. As we move toward ITMP 2030, we will continue to prioritize collaboration and community engagement to ensure our strategies align with the diverse needs of Halifax's communities. The Turret Arts Space redevelopment supports these objectives by fostering cultural vitality and contributing to key tourism assets.

We are excited about the potential of the Turret Arts Space to become a significant cultural driver and destination. Its dedication to supporting artists and the creative community aligns with our ongoing efforts to develop tourism assets that benefit the entire region. We appreciate the vital role that such projects play in both the cultural and economic ecosystems of Halifax, and we remain committed to supporting these efforts.

Sincerely,



Redacted

Brian White, VP Destination Development
Discover Halifax



Redacted

Mark Teeple, VP Festivals and Events
Discover Halifax

Discover Halifax is a Rainbow Registered and 2SLGBTQAI+ allied organization



ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA MUSEUMS

1113 MARGINAL RD HALIFAX NS B3H 4P7 / PH 902-423-4677 / FX 902-422-0881 / WWW.ANSM.NS.CA

February 19, 2025

To Whom it May Concern,

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) is enthusiastic about the prospect of the Turret Arts Space setting a precedent in Queer Heritage Stewardship, and looks forward to collaborating with Turret Arts Space and other stakeholders on piloting this initiative, which aligns strongly with HRM's Culture and Heritage Priorities Plan SHARING OUR STORIES. This initiative EMPOWERS COMMUNITY and approaches heritage conservation from a lens of CO-CREATION, which is critical in telling stories of equity-seeking communities.

Leading the country in Queer Heritage Stewardship would be an incredible accomplishment for Halifax, and the city has the opportunity to demonstrate their allyship and be a beacon of support, all in time for Canada Pride 2027, which will be hosted by Halifax. ANSM is hopeful that HRM City Council partners with the Turret Arts Space for the unprecedented Queer Heritage Site, recognizing its potential as critical culture and heritage hub in the heart of the city.

ANSM has long been a champion for Equity-seeking communities, through our ongoing advocacy work and our programming. This is a great opportunity to bring forth a space in Halifax that will celebrate and accurately reflect Queer history in the city.

Sincerely,

Redacted

Devin Casario

Executive Director

Association of Nova Scotia Museums

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808-1888 Brunswick St.
Halifax, NS, B3J 3J8
Tel: 902 426 8691
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Andy Fillmore, MP

Halifax

August 13, 2021

Re: Expression of Support to the Turret Arts Space Society for the 1588 Barrington Street redevelopment project.

To Whom it May Concern,

As the Member of Parliament for Halifax, I am pleased to write this renewed letter of continued support for the Turret Arts Space Society's ongoing efforts toward redeveloping 1588 Barrington Street (formerly known as the Khyber Building).

Turret Arts Space Society is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to restoring the Khyber Building, leading in providing accessible building access for community members, and - championing affordable rental spaces for not-for-profit arts organizations right in downtown halifax.

Turret Arts Space Society remains interested in the development of 1588 Barrington Street as a multipurpose arts space to dissolve barriers for marginalized members of the artistic community by offering a culturally inclusive space and to build a multi-purpose arts hub that services Halifax and the greater creative Maritime community.

We must continue to support the creation of an accessible and vibrant cultural space that celebrates Halifax's artistic community and establishes a safe space where community members can connect. The Khyber Building has the potential to act as an inclusive and sustainable public space where we can foster culture and community.

I hope that you will consider opportunities to create this vibrant cultural space, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Redacted

Andy Fillmore, MP
Halifax



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Danielle Barkhouse

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First Session

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

[L. Lachance](#) » 9366

TURRET ARTS SPACE SOC.: COM. SERV. - RECOG.

LISA LACHANCE « » : Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the tireless advocacy of the Turret Arts Space Society to develop a sustainable, adaptive reuse plan for 1588 Barrington Street. The building is a heritage and cultural icon, with former beloved identities as the Turret Club, which was the community-led headquarters of the Gay Alliance for Equality and The Khyber Centre for the Arts.

The new Turret Arts Space will house a critically engaged community, where youth, artists, and the public can connect and thrive in a space that is physically, economically, and culturally accessible. Over the last decade, the society has secured \$1 million in public funds and achieved key milestones, including partial hazardous material abatement and designing and developing architectural plans and a 20-year sustainable financial model. The detailed plan for the Turret Arts Space will be publicly launched in October 2024.

I am excited to see the Turret Arts Space come alive in downtown Halifax.



July 15, 2021

To Whom it May Concern,

I am please to write in support of the Turret Arts Space Society's application for funding with Invest Nova Scotia.

The Turret Arts Space Society has an exciting plan to create accessible, community-owned arts space in the heart of Halifax. Their plan to create a culturally inclusive and welcoming, barrier-free, affordable space is very much needed.

As you know, many artists and arts organizations will emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic in an even more precarious or uncertain position. A distinct lack of affordable and accessible arts space in Nova Scotia where artists, creators and arts organizations can host, perform, gather, and create, adds to the challenges faced by artists and arts groups.

The kind of arts infrastructure being proposed by the Turret Arts Space Society is critical to the arts and culture sector - a sector whose contribution to the vibrancy and livability of our province is invaluable.

I am very pleased to support this project and hope you will too.

Sincerely,

Redacted

Susan Leblanc
MLA Dartmouth North
NSNDP Spokesperson for Communities, Culture and Heritage



NOVA SCOTIA
NDP CAUCUS

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THE KHYBER

October 28th, 2022

Re: Expression of Partnership Commitment to the Turret Arts Space Society for 1588 Barrington Street redevelopment project

To Whom It May Concern,

As a representative of Khyber Centre for the Arts I am pleased to write this letter of partnership commitment with the Turret Arts Space Society. The Khyber can enthusiastically commit to becoming an anchor tenant at 1588 Barrington St. which, according to the proposed business plan, entitles us to rental space of the second floor within the building, anchor tenant perks such as discounts on multipurpose room and shared meeting room booking fees, as well as a vote at the society's Annual General Meeting.

Established in 1995, the Khyber Centre for the Arts is a queer artist-run centre that is dedicated to responsively supporting and equitably compensating local, national, and international artists while presenting public programs, artist studios, exhibitions, and events in Kjiptuk. We are a not-for-profit charity that grew out of an arts facility developed in 1994 by the No Money Down Cultural Society, who were a group of artists that negotiated an agreement with the City of Halifax to maintain the city-owned and then unoccupied 3-floor heritage building located at 1588 Barrington St. The Khyber remains active and keenly invested in the development of this building, our old home of nearly 20 years, and are beyond thrilled to imagine a new and multipurpose space for community, art, and expression with the Turret.

Space precarity is an issue for many arts and not-for-profit organizations, including the Khyber. Returning to 1588 Barrington St. as well as having more space for our growing operations and programming would be transformative for us and many communities. We are continuing to expand as an organization, offering public programs 12 months of the year, and employing queer artists in full-time, part-time, and contracted artistic and administrative positions. Having this historic, relevant, collaborative, and expansive space to utilize would nurture the Khyber's growth, employ more artists, and create much needed opportunities within the creative sector.

Our centre presents non-commercial artwork, offers a self-led platform for artists and their practices, and aims to disrupt systemic causes of exclusion, tokenism, and power imbalances

in the arts. We present art in a wide variety of disciplines, work to challenge traditional gallery conventions, and encourage public understanding and appreciation of contemporary art practices and presentation. The second floor of the building has the capacity to hold our gallery, licensed bar, flexible programming and studio space for exhibitions, residencies, and events. Accessing more physical space and greater resources through the Turret Arts Space will support the creation of new works, and greater opportunities for artists to exhibit, perform, gather, and share with the public.

The Khyber is in full support of and appreciates efforts and the initiative that the Turret is advocating for and working very hard towards. Their vision of creating a new and welcoming space in our city for creativity and community cultivating is immensely exciting to us. We look forward to further supporting artists and being housed alongside incredible organizations where new and natural community building, solidarity, and partnerships are a given.

Sincerely,

Redacted

Hannah Guinan (any pronouns)

Director, The Khyber Centre for the Arts

hannah@khyber.ca

Engage Youth. Build Bridges. Realize Potential.

**Greater
than a
Program**

LOVE

Expression of Support and Commitment to the Turret Arts Space Society for the 1588 Barrington Street Redevelopment

September 6, 2022

Founder

Twinkle Rudberg

Nova Scotia Executive Director

Dennis Adams, RSW

Chair of the Nova Scotia Board

Sobaz Benjamin

**Honourary Chair of the Nova Scotia
Board**

Dr. Richard Goldbloom

Nova Scotia Board

Jesse Sharratt (Vice-Chair)

Nikki Baxter (Treasurer)

Daria Fantaci (Secretary)

Shawntay Rose Dann (Youth

Representative)

Shannon Hansen

George Finyanos

Martez Wiggins

To Whom it May Concern,

As the Chief Harmony Officer/Executive Director of Leave Out Violence Nova Scotia (LOVE NS), I am pleased to write this letter of support and intention of commitment to the Turret Arts Space Society's ongoing efforts toward redeveloping 1588 Barrington Street (formerly known as the Khyber Building). LOVE NS enthusiastically commits to becoming an anchor tenant within the building which will entitle us to rental space within the building, use of shared facilities, and a seat on the board of the Society. In fact, we are so excited about the potential of Turret Arts Space as a home-base for LOVE NS, that we are working with the Society to explore coming on as a Junior Partner with an increased stake in the project.

LOVE NS supports youth to thrive through programs and healthy relationships that build emotional intelligence and help overcome the challenges they face. Our healthy relationships are built on 4 valued principles: Real, Open, Adaptable, and Reliable, all with the goal of positive impact and youth empowerment. LOVE NS provides 400 hours of youth programming and 1,200 hours of one-on-one support to youth annually in Nova Scotia (Halifax, Membertou and Sipekne'katik First Nations). Joining the Turret Arts Space will allow us to grow our operation to support even more youth throughout the province.

The downtown location of the Turret Arts Space is particularly appealing to LOVE NS. Our Halifax programs serve youth who arrive by public transit from all over the city. Becoming an anchor tenant at the Turret Arts Space will secure our future back in the heart of downtown Halifax which increases the accessibility of our programs to our youth. Turret Art Space's vision for equity, inclusion, and the end of systemic racism within the arts and the community speaks alongside our vision and values within our organization. There are exciting new opportunities for collaboration with other like-minded organizations within the Turret Arts Space, especially for our introductory youth Media Arts Program.

Our intention to commit to the Turret Art Space was sparked by the leadership at the helm of the project and by the uniqueness of the building itself. Imagine how different Halifax could be with LOVE NS youth and artists activating a heritage building downtown together? The Turret Art Space's team of established professionals have expressed themselves to be organized, tenacious, and forward-thinking. LOVE NS's commitment is subject to the outcome and terms of

the revised Schematic Design, Governance Plan, and Business Plan, which are now, with our consultation, being adjusted to include our organization as an anchor tenant, with the possibility of becoming a Junior Partner in ownership of the building.

Respectfully,

Redacted

Dennis Adams, RSW
Chief Harmony Officer/Executive Director
Dennis@lovenovascotia.ca



PERFORMANCE ▶ NETWORKING ▶ FORWARD THINKING

Oct 22nd 2024

Re: Letter of Support for Turret Arts Space from Prismatic Arts Society

To Whom It May Concern,

The Prismatic Arts Society wholeheartedly supports the Turret Arts Space Society and its comprehensive plan for redeveloping 1588 Barrington Street (formerly “the Khyber”). The Turret’s vision of creating a dynamic, multi-functional cultural destination in downtown Halifax, through the adaptive reuse of this iconic historic property, aligns with our shared goal of fostering a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable arts scene in Halifax.

Prismatic Arts Festival is a national, multi-disciplinary arts festival that proudly showcases the work of Indigenous artists and artists of colour from across the country and beyond. We are dedicated to celebrating diversity in the arts by providing a platform where artists present innovative and boundary-pushing work. At Prismatic, we create inclusive spaces that amplify underrepresented voices, foster cross-cultural collaboration, and engage audiences with performances that reflect the rich diversity of our country. Through our programming, we support the professional development of artists at all stages of their careers and are committed to ensuring that the arts are accessible to all communities.

Prismatic Arts Festival and the Turret Arts Space Society share a mutual commitment to fostering inclusive, accessible, and artist-focused spaces in Halifax. Like the Turret, Prismatic is dedicated to creating safe and welcoming environments where diverse voices, including Indigenous and culturally diverse artists, can thrive. Our work as a national presenter of innovative, boundary-pushing performances parallels the Turret’s vision for multipurpose spaces that encourage creativity and collaboration. We understand the importance of providing professional development opportunities for artists at every stage of their careers, and we fully support the Turret’s plans for facilities like the learning centre, which will be instrumental in nurturing artistic talent. Moreover, both Prismatic and the Turret recognize the value of infrastructure that supports local, national, and international artists, ensuring Halifax remains a vital hub for the arts. The addition of flexible, tech-equipped spaces like the Khyber Gallery and International Residency Studio will undoubtedly enhance the city’s cultural landscape, aligning with our mission to support artist livelihoods and provide platforms for exportable work.

This project is critical to Halifax's future, not only as a vibrant cultural destination but also as a vital resource for the livelihood of its many talented artists, both now and in the years to come.

Thank you for your attention to this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Raeesa Lalani

Redacted

Artistic Director
Prismatic Arts Festival



TURRET

ARTS

SPACE

