

DIVINE DESIGN? SACKVILLE UNITED CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY CENTRE



8/9/2013

Economic Feasibility Report

This document outlines a study conducted to determine if it is economically feasible and sustainable to operate the former Sackville United Church building as a community centre.

Report prepared by: Gwen Zwicker and Amanda Marlin

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Divine Design? Sackville United Church As a Community Centre

ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Gwen Zwicker and Amanda Marlin, community development consultants and former associates of the Rural and Small Town Programme, were asked by Renaissance Sackville to conduct a small unbiased/third party feasibility study into the economic feasibility of re-purposing the Sackville United Church into a community centre. The study took place during July 2013. The church is currently owned by J.N. Lafford Realty and is in increasingly poor condition.

The feasibility study examined the cost of exterior and interior repairs, costs associated with reconfiguring the building to house multiple uses and different organizations, as well as ongoing operational costs. Finally local community organizations in Sackville, NB were contacted to gauge interest in relocating to the church if it became a community centre.

This report explains the purpose of the study and the vision for the building, background history of the United Church, and methodology used. It goes on to detail the present condition of the building, costs associated with building repair and building reconfiguration. We also provide a summary of the responses from community organizations interested (or not) in moving into the church. The report concludes with a discussion of the challenges moving forward and our recommendations on the economic feasibility of the church as a community centre in Sackville.

PURPOSE

The aim of the study was to determine if the Sackville United Church can function in an economically sustainable manner over the long-term as a community centre. The vision for the centre would bring together community groups, non-profit agencies and arts/cultural enterprises. The church sanctuary would be used as a performing arts venue with the remainder of the building used as office space for community organizations. The existing kitchen could be remodelled for a community teaching kitchen and there could be common space as well. Furthermore there may be the opportunity for groups to share office resources such as photocopiers, fax machines, bathrooms and possibly administrative assistants in a way that can only be done if housed under one roof.

BACKGROUND

The present Sackville United Church building was dedicated on October 8, 1875, replacing an earlier brick chapel built in 1836 on the same site. The church was originally built to seat 400. In 1898, an extensive enlargement and renovation allowed for 450 additional seats, with two balconies, four wings, as well as a 12 foot rose stained glass window and 130 foot spire. It was considered the "University Church of Maritime

Methodism” and an “ornament to the town.” In 1927, the church parlours were added to the rear of the building and the pipe organ was installed in 1928.

Sackville United Church’s 850 seats were often full of townspeople and university students over the years until the past few decades when the congregation began to dwindle. As the congregation grew smaller and regular attendees became older, major repairs were no longer possible. Structural, wiring and safety issues were too much for the congregation’s resources and the building was offered for sale. At the time, the value of the land in front of the manse and on which the manse stands was placed at \$572,000. The land on which the church stands and the parking lot was valued at \$644,000 (Sackville Pastoral Charge 2010 Annual Report). Faced with a shaky future, the congregation officially vacated the building on April 1, 2012. The building, manse and properties were sold to J. N. Lafford Realty on January 1, 2013.

Lafford Realty sold the manse and it was moved from the property. Currently, a multi-unit building with both commercial space and apartments is being constructed on the site. There are plans to build one more multi-unit building on the backside of the property. Lafford Realty has no plans for the aging church building. In October 2012 a community meeting was held to see which groups and individuals might be interested in being part of the community centre (the list of attendees from this original meeting was also sent the survey from the current study).

METHODOLOGY

Our methodology included five phases:

1. Interviews with key experts concerning the repairs needed and costs of reconfiguring the building to house a community centre.
2. Interviews with church members about the operating costs of the building.
3. Measuring of rooms which could be rented as office space.
4. Surveys of community organizations and others with potential interest in renting space in the church.
5. Analysis of the above, writing of the report and recommendations on feasibility.

In particular we toured the exterior and interior of the church with general contractor Drew Fraser of Cantech Construction (unconnected to both Lafford Realty and the Town). Mr. Fraser was also involved in estimates provided to the congregation of the United Church when they were looking into necessary repair costs around four years ago (2008/2009). He also assisted Giffin Engineering of Amherst, NS when they conducted their structural assessments of the building and necessary repairs and associated costs. Mr. Fraser provided us with updated estimates to repair the structure (2 columns), and exterior of the church (windows, some siding, and roof, etc) as well as interior (plumbing, heating, painting, mold remediation, etc.). Electrician Allan Pooley also toured the church and provided an estimate to re-wire the entire building and remove all old wiring, which is a fire hazard. Mr. Fraser and Mr. Pooley provided estimates to repair the building as is and an estimate for additional work to reconfigure the building into a multi-use space rented by multiple groups.

Furthermore we obtained and analysed the original engineering reports on the structure of the building and repairs deemed necessary (and costs) in 2008/2009 from J.M. Giffin Engineering.

In addition, we spoke with John Lafford of Lafford Realty who is in favour of the church being repaired and renovated and used as a community centre. He said Lafford Realty could offer \$100,000 worth of in-kind services (labour, etc) toward the renovation but not more than that.

Estimated operating costs of the church were obtained from Bob Gray, current member of the Sackville United Church, from past church records and public annual reports. He also provided summaries of the original engineering reports and some history of the last few years.

Local real estate agents provided the current fair market value of the church building itself if someone were to consider buying the building from Lafford Realty. This was estimated to be \$660,000. However, any future sale of the building would be between Lafford Realty and the Town of Sackville.

Upon touring the inside of the church we took many photos to document the current state of damage, which both Mr. Fraser and Mr. Pooley agreed will grow exponentially worse in the future. These photos are provided throughout this report. We also measured the individual rooms as they currently are configured with the aim of estimating the potential number of offices and space available. Using the current configuration as much as possible will help keep costs lower. The total square footage for the building was provided by Lafford Realty at 10,000 sq ft.

A short survey was sent to 33 community organizations who had previously expressed interest in relocating to the church either by attending a public meeting in October 2012 or by other means. Other groups were contacted whom we and/or Renaissance Sackville thought may be interested in using the space. Despite the very short time frame for this study and it coinciding with summer vacations, our response rate for the survey was 67%. The survey was conducted via email and/or telephone. Questions asked if groups would be interested (why or why not), what they need (square footage, number of rooms, internet, etc), what they think that sort of space would be worth to rent monthly, and how likely they would be to move to the church if the space met their needs (see Appendix C for the full survey).

It is important to note certain methodological challenges given the very short time frame during the busy summer vacation season, and the limited budget for this project. We were unable to hire the services of an architect because both timing and the budget would not allow for it. Thus, detailed plans or mock ups of potentially reconfigured office space, halls, staircases, common areas and bathrooms do not form part of this study. For this reason we do not include a price for new bathrooms as the number depends on the specific number of groups who would rent and their number of staff. Furthermore, at the request of Renaissance Sackville, cosmetic renovations are not included.

There are also many unknowns about the project. For example, we have no way of knowing what contractors may find in the building as walls and ceilings and support columns are opened up. It is quite possible that the condition of the building is even worse than what is seen on the surface. In addition, it is difficult to estimate operating costs of a future community centre housed in the church. We have provided the last operating budget of the church when it was still occupied by the congregation. However, energy use for a church is far lower than for a busy full time community centre. Estimates for the reconfiguration of the building are based on keeping the configuration mainly the same and using the existing rooms as offices. These along with estimates for the repair to the external and interior of the building are provided by a licenced contractor and electrician. All estimates included in this report are preliminary and are subject to many unknowns which could arise when converting a church to a community centre.

PRESENT CONDITION OF THE BUILDING

Heritage Status

Tantramar Heritage Trust confirms that the Sackville United Church is a listed property under the Sackville Historic Sites but it is not believed to be listed on the Provincial Register or the Canadian Register. There has been some discussion and information on registering the building on the Provincial Register but whether or not this has been done could not be confirmed at the time of writing.

Sackville United Church is located within a Conservation Area in the town and as such is subject to the Town of Sackville's By-Law No. 219 (Town of Sackville Municipal Heritage Conservation Area By-Law – see Appendix D). Other than when there is proposed demolition of a building in a Conservation Area, the Heritage Board is concerned with the exterior of the buildings. If the building was to be registered as a provincial heritage site this would make it impossible to change the interior and thus any alternative use for the building would be impossible.

In order to make changes to a building or to demolish a building within a Conservation Area, the by-law states that plans will be required before permits are issued. In regard to demolition of buildings in particular, Tantramar Heritage Trust states:

The Board will make every effort to encourage the preservation of heritage buildings. Where preservation is not viable, a permit may be issued provided that a) the building is offered for sale for a nominal sum on condition that it is removed from the site; b) the Heritage Board has been provided with any photographs, plans, or historical documents relating to the building, or copies thereof; and c) provision has been made for salvaging any items of historical or architectural interest or significance.

In the case of the United Church building, a tour through the building indicated that various things are missing (some pews, documents, pieces of furniture, fixtures etc.). It is unclear whether these have been given to other churches, Maritime Conference archives or other people. Some items in the church are marked as "sold" or as "hold" for particular people.

Aside from the list of repairs, reconfiguration needs and costs below, in order for work to take place on the building, plans will have to be drawn up by an Architect and submitted to the Tantramar Heritage Trust for approval. Permits may or may not be issued by the Trust and the Planning Commission.

Exterior

The congregation of Sackville United Church held several congregational meetings throughout 2010 in which they discussed options for repairing the building and continuing to worship there. At one time, there was a discussion with Maritime Conference to unite the proposed new Maritime Conference office and archives with the church on its current site. This was turned down as too costly a venture by the congregation.

The option agreed upon by the congregation was to raise funds to repair the building. This option was presented after inspections by J. M. Giffin Engineering (see further details



FIGURE 1: TREE GROWING IN CHIMNEY

below) in 2008/2009. In addition to the items identified by J. M. Giffin Engineering, the congregation noted that it would need to budget an additional \$20,000 per year for 5 years in order to perform various maintenance projects:

- Oil tank replacements
- Kitchen upgrades
- Painting and siding repairs
- Masonry repairs to chimney (Figure 1)

In addition to the above maintenance repairs, the Building Committee identified the need for a new roof truss system over the Sunday School rooms and the need for all outside windows to be retrofitted with new efficient window inserts. With the prospect of having to raise several hundred thousand dollars simply to repair the building and continue to use the building as it was used, the congregation ultimately decided they did not have the resources to complete the repairs. This option was turned down and the church building was advertised for sale.

In a letter dated Sept. 26, 2008 addressed to Sackville United Church, James Giffin of J. M. Giffin Engineering identified the following exterior issues:

- The roof has deteriorated causing leaks and...an entire new roof may be required.
- The window sills have deteriorated.
- The foundation appears satisfactory, showing only minor cracks.
- The tower supporting the steeple is missing some siding.
- The steeple may be slightly out of plumb.

Giffin Engineering reported on the condition of the building twice after the above initial inspection. On Nov. 28, 2008, their letter stated:

- One tension tie rod connection through the exterior wall shows stress in the wall finish (see Figure 2).



FIGURE 2: PART OF TENSION TIE ROD

Together with Drew Fraser, Mr. Green of Giffin Engineering accessed the attic “to view the original building framing and the method of structural framing used for the two wings which were added to the sides at a later date. The “Y” shaped tension rods which are visible from the sanctuary are part of the structural support system for the wings’ roof structure. “

Upon viewing the exposed exterior side of the tension tie rod, Mr. Green notes:

It connects to vertical wood columns to laterally support the exterior walls and rafters. It is evident from the connection that this rod has not been tensioned for considerable time and the self weight of the rod has caused the stress signs on the interior wall....We do not have any major concerns here; however, we recommend these original rods be re-tensioned.

In his letter of Jan. 26, 2009, Mr. Green notes that in addition to the issues previously identified:

A survey of the steeple has been completed to determine if there has been any movement...The survey results indicate a deviation from plumbness of $\pm 2''$...This is well within acceptable tolerance.

Interior

Giffin Engineering's letters indicate the extent of interior damage and an assessment of the condition of other items. Issues noted were as follows:

Sept. 26, 2008:

- The floor appears sound.
- The basement is in satisfactory condition and is dry except for one area that has some moisture problems.
- One tie rod connection at the exterior wall shows some stress in the wall finish.
- There are superficial cracks in the plaster which...are due to moisture penetration from the roof leaks and deteriorated window sills.
- There is some separation of the plaster in the walls at the four corners of the sanctuary (see Figure 3).



FIGURE 3: SEPARATION OF PLASTER AT CORNERS

In his letter of Nov. 28, 2008, Mr. Green identifies two areas where a further destructive review was carried out:

1. Severely cracked plaster and apparent settlement in the corners of the sanctuary where the newer wings intersect the original building walls; and
2. One tension tie rod connection through the exterior wall shows stress in the wall finish.

Four heavy timber columns were added to support the new roof framing when the wings were added to the original building. These columns carry the roof load down to the foundation. Mr. Fraser exposed the sills and the bottoms of two of the columns and identified significant dry rot, probably as the result of water damage. The columns and sills in these corners have rotted and settled, causing the cracked plaster. In addition, the settling has caused several windows to begin to bow, raising the danger of the windows either imploding or exploding.



FIGURE 4: PART OF HEATING SYSTEM

The building is currently heated by two forced air oil furnaces (see Figure 4). Parts of the newer section are heated with electrical heat. With little insulation throughout the building and the rising cost of oil and electricity, the heating system is inefficient and costly.



FIGURE 5: WATER DAMAGE TO CEILING

Until our recent walk-through with Drew Fraser and Allan Pooley on July 9, 2013, there has been no further detailed assessment of the building's condition since the last letter from Giffin Engineering in January 2009. The

building has stood without heat since the congregation vacated the building, the roof has further deteriorated and the sills/columns have sustained more damage. As time goes on and the building is left in its present condition, damage will increase exponentially.

The interior of the sanctuary shows large pieces of the ceiling missing (see Figure 5), extensive cracked plaster and evidence of mold. Mold in the choir loft area is so extensive that there are groupings of fungus growing on the walls (see Figure 6). It is obvious that a lot of water damage has been sustained from a leaking roof.



FIGURE 6: FUNGUS GROWING ON WALL

In November 2011, an electrical wire shorted out during a church service. The resulting visit from the Fire Marshall identified several areas of safety to be addressed (see Appendix B). A further review of the current wiring indicates two meters located inside the church along with the wiring panel. It is unclear why the building has or needs two meters.

A detailed inspection of the building's plumbing system has not been conducted to this point. However, a visual review indicates the need to replace old piping to help bring the building up to current standards.

It was noted in our walk-through with Mr. Fraser and Mr. Pooley on July 9, 2013 that in order for the building to become operational again, walls, ceilings and floors would have to be removed and replaced. The current materials are not fire retardant and would not meet current building standards, especially if it is to house multiple groups and uses. Safety items such as panic bars on all the doors and a wired-in fire alarm system throughout the building (see Appendix B) would also have to be installed.

Physical accessibility to the sanctuary and the downstairs area is a challenge. Upon entering the (back) door close to the Parlours, there are stairs down to the kitchen. From there, there are stairs down to the central area under the sanctuary.

Entering the building's main door (on Main St.), there are two staircases on either side to access the sanctuary, but they lack accessibility for those with mobility challenges or children in strollers, for example. Going straight into the downstairs area from the main door, there are stairs down. There is also a step into the former Office/Minister's Study area and the Sunday School room on either side of the hallway from the main/front door.

There is a very narrow staircase which accesses the area behind the former choir loft. At the top of these stairs are two small rooms, which are not large enough for storage or dressing. This area is problematic because of the narrow staircase and the fact that the space at the top is extremely constricted. Also located in this small area is a large blower fan for the organ. From this level, the choir loft is reached by another two narrow staircases on each side of the organ.

Steps are also located between the four upstairs Sunday school rooms, above the former Parlours. This entire area would require a major re-configuration should it be used for offices.

No estimates have been made to repair or replace existing chimneys or walkways. An exterior visual of the chimney located behind the choir loft area shows a tree growing through the side of the chimney.

As mentioned above, in order for the building to be used by any group, it will have to meet certain building standards as determined by the Building Inspector. Depending on detailed inspection of systems identified in this report as well as others, this may add considerable cost to the renovation.

BUILDING REPAIR

As mentioned above, on July 9, 2013 a site visit was conducted with Drew Fraser and Allan Pooley. The estimate below shows estimated costs for repair of the building as it currently stands. This is used as a baseline to establish costs before anything else can be done to the building.

The costs below do not take into account removing and replacing floors, walls and ceilings to have them meet fire and building standards. In addition, it does not address costs to address fire safety issues. Some of these costs are addressed below in the section "Building Reconfiguration Costs."

Exterior

Roof

Replacement of both the flat roof and the sloped roof: \$170,000 for both for asphalt shingles.

Windows

To refurbish all stained glass windows and replace all other exterior windows with vinyl ones: \$40-50,000. If wood windows are wanted instead, multiply the price three times.

Structural Repair

Only the two columns at the rear of the church (by the old Town Hall side) require repair. They would need to be dug out, supported, and replaced. There is currently water infiltration and they are rotting from the bottom. The church structure is sagging because of this. Estimate: \$100-120,000

Miscellaneous exterior fixes (to siding, etc.): \$10,000

Interior

Electrical

New electrical entrance: \$80-100,000

Plumbing

To fix what currently exists – toilets, drains, pipes, etc. (not adding any additional washrooms): \$40,000

Heating

Installation of 2 geothermal heat pumps:

Drilling of wells (closed or open depending on whether ground water is found or not). The property will need 5-6 wells spaced 15 ft. apart in any configuration so as not to heat the surrounding earth too much (if placed too close together): \$80-100,000.

This heating system will save at least 1/3 of the current heating costs and can be pumped into the existing duct work. However, at present not all rooms are connected to the ducts and some may need to be or to remain on expensive electrical heat. The connection of rooms to the heating system if they are not already connected is not included in the price.

Walls

Re-do plaster walls and ceilings: \$70,000 at least

Mold Remediation

Black mold in staircase to choir loft and mushrooms growing along side wall: \$50,000

Paint

Due to the height and intricate wood details, etc. a good quality job will be needed. Estimate: \$100,000 (for existing walls and configuration only).

No estimate has been made to repair or replace existing staircases or interior steps between various rooms. This issue is not only important because of accessibility issues but because of safety issues.

TOTAL for exterior and interior work = \$800,000 plus taxes before reconfiguration.

Repair Estimate

Table 1 Summary of Repair Estimate

Exterior	
Roof	\$170,000.00
Windows (vinyl only)	\$50,000.00
Structural repairs	\$120,000.00
Misc exterior repairs (siding, etc)	\$10,000.00
Interior	
New electrical entrance	\$100,000.00
Plumbing (to repair existing washrooms)	\$40,000.00
Heating (installation of 2 geothermal heat pumps)	\$90,000.00
Walls (repair plaster walls and ceilings)	\$70,000.00
Mold Remediation	\$50,000.00
Paint (for existing configuration only)	\$100,000.00
TOTAL interior and exterior repairs	\$800,000.00

BUILDING RECONFIGURATION

Following the site visit on July 9, a further visit was made to the building to determine how many offices might be created and what their potential size would be.

There are presently 4 rooms above the former Parlours. The supporting wall dividing the four (2 on each side) has a very small door opening and a step up, then down (possibly over a beam below) to access the two rooms on the other side (see Figure 7). This whole area would require a reconfiguration to allow access to the two connecting rooms plus washroom space for these offices. One of these rooms would become a washroom and a hallway access to the rooms behind it. In this configuration, there would be space for three offices measuring: 16 x 18 ft. (288 sq. ft.); 16 x 19 ft. (304 sq. ft.); and 16 x 19 ft. (304 sq. ft.). The present staircase would have to be removed and replaced with one which would allow access to the new washroom/hallway area and two offices but also allow access to the third office which currently exits to the sanctuary. A railing between this office and the sanctuary would have to be replaced because it is a safety hazard in its current configuration.



FIGURE 7: DOOR & STEP LINKING UPSTAIRS ROOMS

The former Parlours each measure 18.5 ft. x 28 ft. (518 sq. ft. each). The first room entered also has a stone fireplace. Costs to deal with the removal or repair of this fireplace were not calculated. The existing washrooms close to these rooms would have to be replaced to make them accessible and account for the potential of more people occupying the building.

There was no consideration given to removing the former kitchen. Our preference was to retain it as a potential community teaching kitchen or for community groups' use. A cost estimate to repair it and replace is provided below in the section on reconfiguration.

The former Nursery rooms have the potential to be divided into two offices, each one 15 ft. x 15.5 ft. (232.5 sq. ft. each). The large open area bordered by these rooms, the kitchen and the building's main entrance would be left as is for programs and activities.

The former Office and Minister's Study are connecting rooms that cannot be disconnected easily. The office space measures 14 ft. x 15 ft. (210 sq. ft.) and the study measures 10 ft. x 11 ft. (110 sq. ft.) with a small space on the side which would have been a small library. This area may serve as a "landlord's office" (for example, for the Town) or as a central, shared administrative space should groups like non-profits choose to move into the building.

There is a Sunday School room on the bottom floor which measures 13 ft. x 18 ft. (234 sq. ft.) with a connecting walk-in storage closet. This room has both a door to the open central area and a door to the hall leading to the building's Main St. entrance.

With the present rooms divided as indicated, there is room for 9 offices and a total of 2,951 sq. ft. Unfortunately, an architect was not available during the timeframe of this study to give an opinion or prepare draft sketches.

At present, performers' stage equipment, props and costumes are stored in the central open area on the bottom floor. This prompted the realization that in order for performing arts to take place regularly in the

building, there would have to be considerable storage space for their equipment. The Sunday School room would provide storage for most of their costumes (thus reducing rentable office space to 8); however, there would be no other space for storage of the large stage equipment or props and no dressing rooms for performers. As explained earlier, the rooms upstairs behind the choir loft are too small to be used for storage or dressing rooms.

BUILDING RECONFIGURATION COSTS

The estimates below were prepared by Drew Fraser and Allan Pooley after a site visit and discussion of the building's potential use as a community centre. Without an architect's concept, amount of space required by possible occupants, configuration of space required by possible occupants, etc. it is difficult to provide accurate estimates; however, these are comparable with office buildings in general. For the purposes of this study we assumed there would be little change to the existing configuration which would allow for nice offices (or one office and one large storage space for theatre props).

Apart from considerable cosmetic changes that may be required by potential renters, existing ceilings, walls and floors will have to be removed and replaced in order for the building to meet office building codes and fire safety regulations. Mr. Fraser estimates \$50.00-\$60.00/sq foot to renovate rooms into offices. This will cover new dry wall, new lighting, and flooring to replace what currently exists. The building is approximately 10,000 square feet and as calculated above, the total square footage of 9 office spaces (or 8 plus 1 prop storage room) equals 2,951.

Extra cosmetic costs have not been included in this report but it should be remembered that they represent a substantial additional cost.

Interior Doors

For new fire doors (a requirement for office buildings where different groups conducting different kinds of activities are housed under one roof) estimate about \$1000 per door (including hardware) plus anywhere from \$500 to \$5000 for installation depending on where they are going and what needs to be done (cut into a wall, supports needed, etc. versus replacing an existing door). For example, at least 8 doors times \$1000 plus installation.

New fire escapes depending on new configuration and renters are not calculated because we don't know the final configuration.

Kitchen

A new community kitchen with multiple commercial grade stainless steel appliances (to withstand a lot of use) will cost around \$70,000 at least.

Electrical Costs

The electrical costs were estimated to provide for 7 offices (rental units) and are attached as Appendix A. Seven units assumes that one of the identified 9 rooms above (see Building Reconfiguration) is used for storage (for performing arts) and 1 is used by the landlord (i.e. the Town). The total estimated is \$395,500 (including HST).

Plumbing

Calculated as part of the repair costs, \$40,000 is needed to repair existing old plumbing only. The plumbing estimates for new offices in the building were not included as they depend on the groups who move in and number of people who will be using the building, etc .

TOTAL costs to renovate the building for multiple groups would be more than \$650,000. This number includes cosmetic work (at \$60/ sq. ft.) for only the 9 offices (or 8 offices and 1 storage room). It also includes new fire doors in their existing locations. It does not include any new bathrooms or fire escapes.

Reconfiguration Estimate

Table 2 Summary of Reconfiguration Estimate

General renovation to create 9 offices (2951 sq ft x \$60/sq ft)*	\$177,060.00
9 fire doors (\$1000 each and \$500 each to install in existing locations)	\$13,500.00
Kitchen	\$70,000.00
Electrical (for 7 rental offices, 1 landlord office, 1 storage room for theatre groups)	\$395,500.00
Plumbing	(not available)
TOTAL reconfiguration costs	\$656,060.00

* This cost is only for the creation of 9 offices according to building codes for office buildings; does not include "cosmetic" finishes specific to renters' requirements, rebuilding staircases, making the building accessible, installation of telephone/internet wiring, etc.

OPERATING COSTS

According to Sackville United Church's 2010 Annual Report, operating costs as of December 31, 2009 were as follows:

Heating Fuel	\$10,842
Hydro	\$ 3,800
Phone and internet	\$ 2,135
Water and sewer	\$ 508
Insurance	\$10,665
TOTAL ANNUAL	\$27,950 or \$ 2,330 per month

The above costs were current in 2009; estimate 6% higher for current operating costs (approximately \$30,000 annually or \$2500/month). The list does not include other operating costs, such as: property tax, lawn maintenance, snow clearing, cleaning, repairs etc.

The church's Building Committee indicated in 2009 (see Current Condition of the Building above) that they would need to budget an additional \$20,000 per year for 5 years in order to perform various maintenance projects. Operating costs would typically include an annual budget for maintenance and repairs and/or a separate capital budget for these items (not only for 5 years but for every year, since repairs would not stop after 5 years). If the \$20,000 was added to the costs above (\$30,000 annually) the total of \$50,000 would put costs at approximately \$4167 per month – not including property tax, year-round outside maintenance, cleaning, etc.

Note that the above costs are those which would see the building operated as one entity as it previously was. Operating costs for a new community centre, particularly if it was divided into office space for various groups, would have to be calculated on individual cases, based on square footage occupied and other services provided. In addition, insurance in a rental building would be higher. Furthermore the church would have used less energy and heat during the week than if the building was full of 8 different community groups doing business all week.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM COMMUNITY GROUPS AND NON-PROFITS

Thirty-three community organizations were contacted by email and/or telephone and asked if they would be interested in renting space in the church, what they would need in the space, and what they feel is fair for rent (see Appendix C). Of the 33 groups, 11 did not respond which was likely due to the short time frame for the study and summer vacations. Of the remaining 22 respondents, 9 said no, they were not interested at all but were supportive of the church being turned into a community centre. Eight groups said yes they were interested and 5 said maybe; that it depended on a number of factors. The discussion below presents more detail.

Groups Interested

There were eight community organizations (out of 22 who responded) that said they were interested in renting space in the church should it become a community centre. However, at least four groups (Community Garden, Laubach Literacy, Seniors College, and independent artists, etc) said they cannot pay much for rent. For example, Ken Mikalauskas, who runs a small marketing and design firm said he feels that offices in the church that would suit his needs should be between \$60 and \$80 a month to rent. Other groups could not specify an amount but said they could not afford very much. The Community Garden has very little revenue and runs with the help of volunteers. They are currently looking for a small office space. They are hopeful that they might be able to access some additional funding to cover rent. They are keen on a community centre set up that has the ability to increase efficiencies. The coordinator said, "Having a space with multiple community organizations in one place would allow for ideas to grow. These groups often collaborate currently, so rather than emailing we would be located in one area which would make working more efficient."

Only two performing arts groups were interested in renting the sanctuary but only for a couple of weeks a year each. Festival by the Marsh and the Performer's Company feel a reasonable rent would be about \$1000 a week. Windsbreath is also interested in renting the space a few times a year for specific events. They feel they could not pay more than \$100 a day. Open Sky might also rent occasionally for public education events.

Five groups might be interested (depending on various factors, most importantly cost) to rent a space. Two groups (ACORN and Sackville Art Association) said that if the rent in their current locations increases and rent

in the church is less and met their needs, they would move. ACORN likes the idea of a shared space with shared resources among non-profits. Currently the Sackville Art Association rents space in the Middle Sackville Baptist Church for \$30 a session. They have had to leave previous spaces when rent went up to \$50. Evelyn Germain, who teaches dance, could also be interested in the church (in the parlours with their wood floors) if the price was right (less than \$25 an hour). The Chamber of Commerce felt they needed a lot more information to make a decision including understanding the vision for the space, access parameters for tenants, storage options, security of confidential files, and more. The Tantramar Family Resource Centre might also be interested but it depends on what kind of community centre develops. They would like to be part of a health and social services centre that sees all these related groups under one roof. If this is not the vision for the community centre, they would stay put with the Food Bank where their clients (of lower socio-economic status) feel comfortable approaching them for help. Such clients will very likely shy away from a centre that is shared with artists, performers, businesses, and other groups.

The above groups have the following list of needs:

- Janitorial service
- Secure storage
- 7 secure offices (one group requires 3-5 rooms within their office)
- Internet/telephone
- Board room (could be a shared space)
- Shared administrative assistant
- Shared office equipment (photocopier, scanner, paper cutters, etc.)
- Classroom for 40 (Seniors College)
- Classroom for 10 (Laubach Literacy)
- Large common room for dance classes, art classes, programing and other public events

Groups Not Interested

Of the 22 who responded, nine said they are not interested in renting space in the church. The vast majority of these groups were, however, supportive of the church being converted to a community centre. They felt the building could not meet their needs. For example, the food bank is happy where it is. Its clients enjoy the private entrance and it requires a lot of space (more than 800 sq feet) and easy access. The library would also require a larger space than what is possible in the church. Struts Gallery needs to own their space in order to access funding to cover related expenses so they are unable to rent. Community Schools already has enough space and is happy where they are. Mount Allison University currently has more space than it needs so they are not interested in renting space in a community centre. Playschool Inc. is also happy where they currently are and enjoy many benefits of being in the high school. The Tantramar CB Radio Club does not have enough members anymore to require space. They now meet in members' homes. Sappy Fest said the "deal breaker" for them is the lack of street front space, but they are supportive of the venture and would be happy to continue to lend their thoughts and expertise toward this initiative. The Tantramar Heritage Trust does not require any more space but they are also willing to provide advice, specifically on the heritage preservation during renovations. However, they do not have any material resources to offer.

Summary and Potential Revenue from Rental Income

In summary there are 13 community organizations that are interested or may be interested in renting space in the church should it meet their needs regarding shared resources, office space, etc. However, due to the nature of these groups none of them are able to pay very much toward rent. The following is a calculation of the potential rental income these groups could afford and the space they need:

Group	Space Required	Proposed Rent
ACORN	3 to 5 room office space	\$500 or less a month
Chamber of Commerce	Office, board room, storage	Not sure, depends on many things
Community Garden	Small office	Not very much
Dance Classes	Parlours as dance studio	Less than \$25 an hour
Festival By the Marsh	Sanctuary	\$1000/week for two weeks a year
Laubach Adult Learning Centre	Large classroom for 10 and office space	Not much
Open Sky	Large room for public events	Not sure
Performers Company	Sanctuary	\$150-200/day for 10 days a year
Sackville Art Association	Large room with good light	\$30 a session
Seniors College	Large classroom for 40 and office space	Not much
TFRC	Office, storage, large common programing room	Not sure, but would apply for grants to cover rent
Windsbreath	Sanctuary or large room for public events	\$100/day (periodically for events)
Ken Mikalauskas (private marketing and design firm)	Office, shared board room	\$60-80 a month

CHALLENGES MOVING FORWARD

There are some community groups who have shown interest in moving into the church if it were to become a community centre, however, their combined rental income does not appear to cover anticipated operating costs calculated above to be more than \$4167 per month. Furthermore, five groups would only be occasional users of the space. The rest of the expenses would have to be considered in some other way. The other challenge is how to pay for the huge repair and reconfiguration costs. Repairs can be done, but at a very high cost. The numbers quoted within this report are only estimates and the actual cost of repairs may be much higher depending on how long it is before the work is started and what else is discovered as walls come down and contractors are able to have a closer look.

If the committee examining the potential to convert the church to a community centre were to go ahead with this project, significant funds would be required from federal, provincial and municipal governments, as well as private donors and foundations. There is support for saving the church building but there may not be widespread support for spending a lot of money to do so.

The heritage designation of the building may present challenges for a community centre. For example, no changes or modifications can be made to the outside of the building – no additional doors or entrances. Fire exits (necessary when you have different groups under one roof) will need to go out windows, pending approval by the Fire Marshall. Groups will not be able to have direct access to the outside for their clients, as they could elsewhere. Some groups said the lack of street-front access is a deterrent to moving to the church. Being hidden in an upstairs, back side office may not be ideal. This also presents the challenge of accessibility, including for those in wheel chairs and for others such as young children or the elderly. As previously noted, there are many stairs and steps in the building. The lift for the back staircase has been sold and there are no lifts for the front staircases.

In addition, cosmetic renovations (floors, paint, doors, fixtures, knobs, etc) can add up quickly depending on their quality and design. Again, as previously noted, floors, doors, walls etc. would all have to be removed and replaced to bring the building up to standard. This will change the costs. In addition because we do not know for sure which groups would move in and how the building could be reconfigured (number of new bathrooms, location of new fire doors, etc) it is hard to estimate an accurate cost for renovations to reconfigure the building for multiple groups.

Heating the building has always been a costly challenge. Both artists and dancers are concerned about the cold temperatures in the church in particular. This may be alleviated by the installation of a geothermal heat pump but this system has huge upfront costs.

The final challenge is that the building will get worse faster than it has in the past. It was estimated that the same damage seen over the last three years may happen again in only one year. Time is of the essence. The time it takes to raise or find the money may be too long, the damage will get worse and the costs will increase again. Repairs are doable but at a very high cost.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Sackville United Church is an impressive building that has been part of the Sackville landscape for over 130 years. It is beloved by many local residents and there is a strong desire by many to see it saved. However, wooden structures are not meant to last forever, especially when not able to be cared for properly. The current state of disrepair requires more than \$800,000 to fix. The work needed inside to reconfigure the building to allow for multiple renters is estimated to be more than \$650,000. This totals \$1,450,000 (and does not include new bathrooms, fire exits or other renovations/reconfigurations specific to the groups who might move in). After this initial sum is spent to make the building useable as a community centre, an ongoing \$4,167 in monthly operating costs need to be covered (this includes ongoing maintenance and repair but does not include things like property taxes and insurance for a rental building). We believe that the operating costs will be much higher than the \$4,167 estimated by the Sackville United Church Building Committee in 2009 when the building was used solely as a church. The upfront costs to repair and renovate the building are very high. The ongoing operating costs appear to be much higher than what the current 13 groups interested in the church can cover in monthly rent.

It is our recommendation that due to the high cost of repairs and operating costs and the small potential rental income from non-profit groups and arts related businesses that converting the United Church into a community centre does not make good or feasible economic sense.

Other potential buildings that may be more economically feasible to renovate and operate include the former fire hall, which is in a good location and is currently unoccupied. The old liquor store on Lorne St is also in good condition, is quite large and is in a central location, although it is within the flood plain. Another centrally located building is the former RCMP station on Union St. Being a brick building it appears to be in good condition and is in a good location, although it is smaller.

Perhaps (as the TFRC said) it makes more sense to group health and social services together in one spot (especially for those of lower “socioeconomic status” who may not feel comfortable around other groups such as stores, artists, environmental groups, etc.) and house artists and environmental type groups together in another spot. Having two smaller buildings may be easier to operate and more cost effective to meet the needs of both the service providers and their clients in a better, more suitable fashion.

REFERENCES

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Estimate to re-configure United Church building. Drew Fraser. July 2013. Telephone interview after touring the building.

Estimate for electrical to re-configure United Church building. Allan Pooley. July 2013.

Letter from J. M. Giffin Engineering. January 26, 2009.

Letter from J. M. Giffin Engineering. November 28, 2008.

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Sackville Tribune-Post: United Church may Close Sooner than Planned.

<http://www.sackvilletribunepost.com/News/2012-02-22/article-2904776/United-Church-may-close-sooner-than-planned/1> Accessed July 13, 2013.

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APPENDIX A – ELECTRICAL QUOTE

Pooley's Electric – Estimate to wire the United Church building as a commercial building.

POOLEY'S ELECTRICAL SERVICES LTD.
 81A Queens Road, Sackville, N.B. E4L 4H1
 (506) 536-3005

Proprietor: ALLAN POOLEY
 Electrical Engineering Technologist

Date: _____ HST: # R104265483
 Client: P 2

Qty.	Materials	Unit Price	Total
	Basic Cost Breakdown		
	Permits + Elec. Plus		30,000
	New Service Entrance		85,000
	Sub Services		
	400 AMP Performing Arts		10,000
	200 AMP Kitchen		5,000
	7 Rentals + Landlord Panel		16,000
	Re-wiring of 7 Rental Units		42,000
	Re-wiring of Performing Arts		58,000
	Lighting		30,000
	Re-wiring Landlord Areas		18,000
	Re-wiring Kitchen		5,000
	Allowance for Exit/Emergency Lights		25,000
	Mics		16,000
	Total		\$ 395,000
	Payment due upon receipt of invoice.		
	Note: Interest 2% per month (24% per annum) on all overdue accounts.		

POOLEY'S ELECTRICAL SERVICES LTD.
 81A Queens Road, Sackville, N.B. E4L 4H1
 (506) 536-3005

Proprietor: ALLAN POOLEY
 Electrical Engineering Technologist

Date: July 17, 2013 HST: # R104265483
 Client: Town of Sackville P 1
Att. Amanda Marche

Qty.	Materials	Unit Price	Total
	Project Sackville United Church		
	Budget Costing (only)		
	Basic Information		
	- New 1200 AMP 3P 208 volt Service		
	Entrance with Separate Meters		
	- For the following		
	- Main Church (Performing Arts)		
	- Kitchen		
	- Landlord		
	- 7 office areas		
	- All new wiring and Panel		
	for Each Rental/Metered Area		
	with some basic allowance for		
	light fixtures and power for		
	Mini split AC/Heating unit		
	(install by others)		
	Payment due upon receipt of invoice.		
	Note: Interest 2% per month (24% per annum) on all overdue accounts.		

APPENDIX B – TRIBUNE-POST ARTICLE

Sackville Tribune-Post Article – February 22, 2012

United Church may close sooner than planned

A recent visit from the regional fire marshal's office may result in the Sackville United Church closing sooner than expected.

Published on February 22, 2012

Katie Tower

The congregation members from Sackville's United Church are hoping to at least make it through the winter before they're forced to close the doors to their building and find other accommodations.

Rev. Catherine Gaw, the minister of Sackville United, says her congregation has been facing some tough challenges over the past few months as the costs to upgrade and maintain the aging and drafty church continue to pile up.

The church, and the nearly three acres of property it sits on at the corner of York and Main Streets, has been up for sale for about a year now. So the local church-goers were well aware they would be moving out sooner or later.

But that fate has come sooner than expected after a recent visit from the regional fire marshal's office has forced the congregation to reconsider its short-term plans. "He left six orders he'd like us to have completed for us to be able to remain here for any length of time," said Gaw.

The fire marshal inspected the local church in January, after the congregation requested the visit following an electrical panel shorting out during church services last November. "That gave us a real wake-up call. There were some concerns over safety . . ."

The two major items on the fire marshal's list included installing panic bars on all the doors and putting in a new wired-in fire alarm system throughout the building.

Gaw said the church has received quote estimates from local contractors for the two projects, which were simply too costly to consider. She said the congregation met to discuss their options and decided that, to spend money on these upgrades when they are planning to sell the building, was "not a wise use of our resources." So now they are looking at having to vacate the premises within the next month or two, probably by April 1st at the latest.

Gaw said thanks to being "richly blessed with good neighbours," the United Church congregation has been offered use of the Mount Allison University Chapel for their weekly services and they are in discussions with other local congregations about using space in their churches as well.

She said she is also confident the community groups who use their church parlours for their programs will find alternate accommodations as well - including the weekly bridge club, Beavers, and the parents & tots program. "We're trying to take care of the immediate short-term plans while also looking at what we need to do long term," said Gaw.

The 135-year-old United Church in the centre of downtown Sackville was put on the market last spring when the church council decided they needed to downsize to a smaller, more efficient building.

With weekly attendance numbers dwindling over the past few years, rising oil prices and ongoing repairs becoming a concern, it was an option they said they could no longer ignore. And the costs to bring the building up to date - making it more energy-efficient and accessible - were simply out of reach for the local congregation. A couple hundred thousand dollars would be required for the necessary repairs, such as putting on a new roof, replacing windows, and building new sills and pillars.

So last spring, the church council, along with some help from its building committee, brought forward a recommendation to its members - to seek out potential buyers who would consider purchasing the property while leaving a piece of land aside for the congregation to build a newer, smaller building. The congregation voted 72 per cent in favour.

"The building is too large and we can no longer sustain it," said Gaw.

Wallie Sears, longtime member of the United Church, agreed the building is a 'cadillac' church that has grown too large for its present use. "It's a massive complex for 60 to 70 people to go and worship," said Sears. But he also said people have to realize that leaving the church behind is going to be an emotional time for the congregation members as well as the community members who regularly use the building. "When the doors are locked, the community is going to realize what a valuable asset it is."

Gaw said the decisions they have been making over the past year have been difficult. "Everyone has ties to this building so this has not been easy."

Although the building still remains on the market, Gaw said she expects the congregation will need to relocate by this spring because of the new requirements by the fire marshal's office. But she pointed out that the sale of the church will still continue as is, and any buyer would have needed to deal with those safety requirements if they were to save the building anyway.

APPENDIX C - SURVEY

Survey sent to Community Groups

Gwen Zwicker and I (Amanda Marlin) have been asked by Renaissance Sackville to conduct a short study into multi-purpose use of the former Sackville United Church building. Our conclusions will identify whether the building can be economically feasible and sustainable as a community centre.

The idea is that the building may be a good location to bring together community groups, non-profit agencies and arts/cultural enterprises. The church sanctuary would be used for performing arts while the remainder of the building would house community groups, non-profit agencies and/or others. There may be the opportunity for groups to share office resources (communal secretary, photocopiers, etc.) in a way that can only be done if housed under one roof.

We would like your thoughts on the potential development of this building. Please reply to the following questions and return by Tuesday, July 23. This is a very time-sensitive study which we are aiming to have completed by July 31. If you prefer, feel free to call me at 364-0823 with your thoughts.

1. Would your organization be interested in locating in this common space with other community organizations? Why or why not?
2. What would you need to have provided in order to move to this location - (number of rooms desired, square footage needed, access, common area, shared office resources, phone/internet, etc.)?
3. What do you see as a reasonable cost per month for your organization to rent space in the building?
4. If the space were available and met your needs, how likely would you be to move?

Please provide as much information as possible. Any additional comments would also be helpful. Please let me know if you are not interested in moving to the church as that is also very useful information.

APPENDIX D – SACKVILLE HERITAGE BY-LAW

By-Law No. 219: Town of Sackville Municipal Heritage Conservation Area By-Law

BY-LAW NO. 219

TOWN OF SACKVILLE MUNICIPAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION AREA BY-LAW

The Council of the Town of Sackville, under authority vested in it by the Heritage Conservation Act, Chapter H-4.05, Statutes of New Brunswick 2010, enacts as follows:

INTERPRETATION

1. In this By-law,

- (a) “Act” means the Heritage Conservation Act, Chapter H-4.05, Statutes of New Brunswick 2010;
- (b) “alter” means to change the character-defining elements of the exterior appearance of a building;
- (c) “alteration” means any change set out in clause (b);
- (d) “Appeal Board” means the Appeal Board defined in the Act;
- (e) “Board” means the Heritage Board appointed pursuant to the Act by the Town of Sackville;
- (f) “building” in the case of properties that are or were used for residential purposes means only the structure or structures on the property within which people live or once lived, unless other structures on those properties are specifically listed in Schedule “A” or Schedule “B” to this by-law;
- (g) “character-defining elements” mean the materials, forms, spatial configurations, size, shape, exterior surface textures, colours, decorative features, relationship to its site and other elements concerning the exterior appearance of a building that must be retained in order to preserve the heritage value of that building;
- (h) “conservation area” means a municipal heritage conservation area established under the Act and defined in Section 2 of this By-law;
- (i) “development” means an alteration, the construction of a new building, the construction of an addition to a building, the demolition of a building, or the relocation of a building into or within a conservation area;
- (j) “owner” means the registered owner or lessee of a building, or a person in possession of a *bona fide* contract to purchase a building; and
- (k) “permit” means a municipal heritage permit provided for by the Act.

CONSERVATION AREA AND ADMINISTRATION

2. Those portions of the Town of Sackville described in Schedule “A” and Schedule “B” to this By-law are hereby established as conservation areas.

3. The Board shall administer this by-law in accordance with the Act and shall

- a) maintain a register of buildings,

- b) maintain images and descriptions of the types of buildings and their character-defining elements,
- c) make every reasonable effort to ensure that owners are aware of the character- defining elements of their buildings,
- d) make available to owners advice on how those elements can be maintained,
- e) maintain records of its decisions and of the reasons for its decisions and make those records available to the public, and
- f) keep owners advised on the financial support that may be available to assist them in maintaining those elements, including support from the Town of Sackville.

PERMITS

4. No development shall be undertaken until a permit has been issued and

- a) every right of appeal under the Act has been exercised, or
- b) the time prescribed for the exercise of such rights has expired.

5. A permit shall be issued if a development conforms to the standards and requirements of sections 7 and 8 of this By-law.

APPLICATION FOR A PERMIT

6. (1) An application for a permit shall be filed with the Secretary of the Board in the form prescribed by the Board and shall include,

- a) in the case of an existing building, plans which describe any proposed additions, demolitions, or alterations, and
- b) in the cases of a proposed building, or the relocation of a building within a conservation area, plans including details relating to the position of the building on the site.

(2) The Board may refuse to issue a permit where it has insufficient information to decide whether the development meets the standards and requirements set out in sections 7 and 8 of this By-law.

(3) The Board shall not refuse to grant a permit for a development on the basis that the development does not comply with the standards and requirements set out in sections 7 and 8 of this By-law without first affording the owner an opportunity to be heard by the Board in person.

(4) If the Board determines that a development meets the standards and requirements set out in sections 7 and 8 of this By-law, or would meet those standards and requirements if certain terms and conditions were met, the Board shall forthwith issue a permit to the owner.

(5) The permit shall be dated and signed by the Chair of the Board or designate and shall state that the development for which application has been made is approved by the Board and shall specify any terms and conditions which may be imposed in order to bring the development into conformity with the standards and requirements set out in sections 7 and 8 of this By-law.

(6) If the Board determines that a permit should not be issued, the Board shall forthwith notify the applicant of such determination, furnishing the applicant with a written statement of why the development does not meet the standards and requirements set out in sections 7 and 8 of this By-law.

(7) Decisions of the Board may be appealed to the Appeal Board in accordance with the Act.

(8) Notwithstanding the foregoing, a heritage officer appointed pursuant to the Act to assist the Board in carrying out its duties may issue a permit where he or she is satisfied that the application complies with the standards and requirements set out in section 7 of this by-law. If the heritage officer is not satisfied that an application complies with the requirements set out in section 7 of the By-law, he or she shall refer the application to the Board for consideration. A heritage officer may not issue a permit which is subject to any terms or conditions.

STANDARDS

7. (1) Contemporary design of new buildings is encouraged provided that the design is compatible with the size, scale, materials and character of existing buildings within the conservation area.

(2) An alteration shall comply with the following standards:

- a) Intact or reasonably repairable character-defining elements will not be removed or substantially changed.
- b) Where character-defining elements cannot be reasonably repaired they are to be replaced with new elements that match in appearance the forms, materials and detailing of the elements being replaced.

(3) An addition to an existing building shall comply with the following standards:

- a) The addition must be visually compatible with the character-defining elements of the existing building.
- b) The addition must not impair the essential form and integrity of the existing building if the addition is removed in the future.

(4) Mid-block utility buildings (such as sheds, garages, etc.) which do not front on any street are exempt from the standards set forth in this Section.

DEMOLITION OR RELOCATION

8. (1) No building may be moved if it is to be relocated within the conservation area unless in the new location the building will comply with subsection 7(1).

(2) No building shall be demolished unless

- (a) such building has been identified by the Board as incompatible with the conservation area; or
- (b) the building has been offered for sale for a nominal sum on condition that the purchaser remove it from the property at the purchaser's expense and no sale has been made after six months;
- (c) the owner or his or her representative has met with the Board and, if requested to do so by the Board, has made arrangements to provide to the Board, at the expense of the owner, any available photographs, plans or historical documents relating to the building, or copies thereof; and

(d) the owner or his or her representative has met with the Board and made provision for the salvaging from the building, prior to demolition, of any items of historical or architectural interest or significance.

(3) No building shall be removed from the conservation area until the owner or his or her representative has met with the Board and, if requested to do so by the Board, has made arrangements to provide to the Board, at the expense of the owner, any available photographs, plans or historical documents relating to the building, or copies thereof.

ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

9.(1) Contraventions of this By-law may be dealt with and may incur such penalties as provided by the Act.

ENACTMENT

10. (1) This by-law comes into force on the date of final passing thereof.

Read a first time this ____12th____ day of ____October____, 2010

Read a second time this __13th____ day of ____December __, 2010

Read a third time and passed Council this __13th__ day of __December____, 2010.

Mayor Clerk