

Shifting views: The Citadel Hill Viewplanes and Historic Functions

by

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This work was written and submitted on unceded Mi'kmaq territory.

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1.0 Introduction

“...for many Haligonians, it (Citadel Hill) is the dominant physical expression of the very purpose of the City from its inception in 1749”¹

In 1974 the City of Halifax established a bylaw to protect the views of Citadel Hill from encroaching development². Citadel Hill, recognized as a National Historic Site in 1951³, holds a special place in the hearts of Haligonians as the central landmark that provided military might, national & civic pride, and a recreational destination. The hill itself housed 4 separate forts⁴ over its commissioned time from Edward Cornwallis’ arrival in 1749 to just after the Second World War⁵. The final fortress design, which was finished in 1856, stands today as a key component of Parks Canada’s preserved “National Defense Complex”⁶ and is central to the historic tourism industry in Nova Scotia.

Halifax’s fondness for the hill lead to the legal view protection in 1974,⁷. The (then) City of Halifax bylaw took the desire to protect the views and came out with the concept of “viewplanes”⁸: a triangular slice of view, projected from a chosen location, that should encompass an area of low development to maintain a semblance of historical view from Citadel

¹ City of Halifax Department of Planning, nd.

² City of Halifax Department of Planning, 1974.

³ Government of Canada, Parks Canada, *nd.*

⁴ Raddall, 1993.

⁵ Government of Canada, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1973.

⁶ Government of Canada, Parks Canada, 2009.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ For the purpose of this report we will be using “viewplanes” as a single word, however there is inconsistency throughout Halifax and HRM documentation over “view planes” or “viewplanes”.

Hill. The map of the final viewplane's voted through by council on January 31st, 1974⁹ is shown in Appendix.

The viewplanes were a product of several factors during the sixties and seventies, each of which shaped the conversation about how and why the viewplanes were created and what they were intended to do. These factors include a rise in heritage activism, introduction of newer technologies and the resulting increase in development height, Modernism's impact on urban planning and development, tourism as an emerging economic driver, and a renewed interest in building identity outside of the context of war.

The viewplane bylaw of 1974 has been unusually consistent for municipal governance, especially considering the City of Halifax's 2006 amalgamation with surrounding municipalities to form the Halifax Regional Municipality. With the exception of an amendment made to Viewplane #6 for construction of the Maritime Centre in August 1974, the bylaw has stood unchanged through several master plans and amalgamation.¹⁰ This consistency, however, does not indicate a lack of challenge and debate over the viewplanes. The intention of protecting Citadel Hill's views and the resulting conflict with development in Halifax has remained relevant.

In many ways the Halifax viewplanes are a codex for understanding the development vs. heritage debate for the last 45 years. Every major development within the downtown area has faced opposition based on the argument of viewplanes or their 1980's iteration of height control. Halifax's recent history is filled with developments like the 2006 "Twisted Sisters" towers¹¹, the

⁹ "Halifax City Council Minutes.," 1974a.

¹⁰ "Halifax City Council Minutes.," 1974b.

¹¹ "Halifax 'Twisted Sisters' Development Gets Go-ahead", 2007

2017 Convention Centre or various others back to the catalyst of the bylaw in the first place: the Citadel Inn renovation¹². The proposed 11 storey addition to the Citadel Inn would be the first major confrontation between development heights and the views from the hill. Proposals near the viewplanes tend to face opposition from the pro-heritage activists that have stayed on this issue since the 1970s. This tension exists despite the views being protected municipally by the 1974 bylaw (and resulting carry-forward protection through amalgamation) and the views being a component of the original character-defining elements determined by the Federal Government when recognizing Citadel Hill's national historic significance in 1951. Stated as follows in the character-defining elements via Parks Canada:

“4. viewplanes to the inner harbour, to landward approaches, to other harbour defences, to the town blocks adjacent to the harbour and those historically linked to the Citadel such as Royal Artillery Park, the Commons, and the Public Garden¹³.”

The bylaws and determination of the views being identified as a character-defining element is a very comprehensive protection, yet each decade following the viewplane bylaw has seen new conversation on what the viewplanes are accomplishing and their trade off with development and economics. To this end, this thesis will examine the beginning of the viewplaness and the reasoning behind their protection.

Throughout the city reports, public meetings, activist literature, and council minutes there is a gap in discussion concerning the Citadel Hill Viewplanes. Mainly, the actual “why” of their

¹² Pacey, 1985.

¹³ “Halifax Citadel National Historic Site of Canada,” n.d.

existence. This report will seek to answer the basic historical value of the viewplanes (and their resulting protection) by asking:

Why were the Citadel Hill Viewplanes protected and how has that affected their preservation?

This question will be explored through an explanatory study; where research will be looking at documentation from the period to understand the conversations that informed and steered legislation. This is a look at more recent history and planning practices, meaning that outside of the literature review this study will primarily on the 20th century and beyond. The body of this study will focus on the initial conversations surrounding views protection, and the resulting effects those original terms and protections had on Halifax and HRM surrounding development. This study will not include any provincial legislation due to their lack of jurisdiction, nor will it look into the complicated history of Federal management of Parks and National Historic Sites. This is primarily a study of Halifax, its people, and its history.

Ultimately, this work seeks to identify why citizens and council thought viewplanes were important, how their value was codified into regulation, and the resulting consequences of those governing practices on development and activism. It is an exploration into preservation through governance: how do we preserve what we want to keep, and where might we slip on honouring the past. The Citadel Hill viewplanes are an opportunity to understand conservation in context and better the ways we keep our identity sustained.

1.2 Tourism vs. Heritage Tourism

The following is a definition that the reader will need to understand the context of work presented in this report.

- Tourism vs. heritage tourism:
 - Heritage tourism is described as “the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs”¹⁴. It is distinguished by the specific nature of the experience being driven by cultural or historical uniqueness.

¹⁴ Soyeon Kim. (2018) Virtual exhibitions and communication factors. *Museum Management and Curatorship* 33:3, pages 243-260.

2.0 Methodology

This study explores the reasoning behind the regulation of the Citadel Hill viewplanes through analysis of historical records including newspapers, council minutes, and city reports. This is an explanatory study that seeks to identify why Halifax protected the Citadel Hill viewplanes. The goal is to present an understanding of how the viewplane bylaw was created. The analysis draws upon mainly primary sources fortified and critiqued from secondary sources using a framework of historical research as a guide.

Research will depend on heavy use of both the Halifax Municipal Archives and the Nova Scotia Provincial Archives. Council minutes and city bylaws are the primary focus and will enlighten the decision-making process. Additionally, the evolution of the viewplanes is discussed in the frame of evolving heritage practices and federal conservation policy during the primary period of 1935 onward, most discussion will be based in the 1960s and 1970s, but 1935 is the beginning of Citadel Hills transition from defense to monument. These government documents are supplemented by all media sources available, particularly Letters to the Editor or quotes in articles about the decisions being made about the viewplanes.

This study incorporates documentation from archives and libraries that tell the story of the viewplanes since their early recognition to when they were made official in bylaw. Conversations from council, from activists, and from development interests will inform the what may have shaped changes in the viewplanes. A explanatory historical methodology was chosen to explore conversation at the time and attempt straightforward interpretation. This work seeks to tell what happened and provide a foundation for future conversations concerning the interpretation of the viewplanes.

Limitations on this study include the extent of the historical record, available documentation, and the scope of the study being limited to the decision of the bylaw. This study does not deal with economic conditions of the period which may or may not have direct influence on the analyzed decision-making process.

3.0 Literature Review

“Here the water was deep, and the land sloped to the crest of a sugarloaf hill, all covered with forest, which someday might be made into a citadel comparable with that of Quebec.”¹⁵

3.1 Four forts and Halifax as a British Garrison

Halifax’s written canon is fortunate to have some major historical works that provide a strong foundation for its history. The earliest of these works is Thomas B. Akins influential “History of Halifax City,”¹⁶ originally published in 1895. Akins work compiles the experience, historical research, and events of their lifetime to explain as much as they could about Halifax’s development. The book is a series of Akins’ pamphlets and writing which they added to over their lifetime. Akins work is undeniably dated with an focus on colonial expansion and historical narrative focused on written lists rather than interpretation. However, their recollections of the day-to-day operations and upkeep of Citadel Hill are valuable to understanding the place the hill and military played in developing the geography of Halifax.

Akins’ work, due to the slow additive process of their writing, is not in chronological order. Their earliest (date-wise) mention of Citadel Hill is:

“About the year 1778, the Citadel Hill appears to have been, for the first time, regularly fortified; the summit was then about 80 feet higher than at present (in 1895)”¹⁷

¹⁵ Raddall, 2010

¹⁶ Akins, Thomas B. History of Halifax City. Hardpress Publishing, 1895.

¹⁷ Ibid

The hill and its fortifications are a regular topic of note for Akins. Throughout their work the daily role of the hill is discussed often; from the fishermen who volunteered to man the battery's¹⁸ to the liquor-fueled chaos of the street below the hill during periods of heavy soldier occupation in Halifax¹⁹. The Citadel's place in Halifax, and the impact on its urban fabric, was noteworthy as early as the 19th century.

Akins makes mention of the earliest practice of signalling, a practice wholly dependant on a clear line of sight (referred to in this thesis as a viewplane) between the military locations of the time. Akins states:

“The old Block house on Citadel Hill being in ruinous condition, was taken down this year, but the flag and signal staffs which were on it, were preserved.”²⁰

This establishes the use of signalling from Citadel Hill as early as 1789. Of note from this quote as well is the decay of Citadel Hill's structures. Akins notes several times that the garrison infrastructure of Halifax lived in a constant state of decay and repair in tandem with the war efforts of the British Empire²¹.

Akins' history is filled with details of the arrival and work of Prince Edward, Duke of Kent. Prince Edward's arrival in 1794²² marked the beginning of a major shift in Halifax's defense complex: mainly the repair and renewal of the harbour fortifications and the construction of “towers on George's Island, Point Pleasant, the East Battery, Meager's Beach and York

¹⁸ Akins, History of Halifax City, 1895

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² Ibid

Redoubt”²³. The work of the Duke of York (and more so the 500 Jamaican Maroons he employed) lead to the network of defense posts we are familiar with today²⁴. Akins also notes that Prince Edward introduced new signalling systems between his towers, with the use of flags and lanterns becoming the standard for communication between them²⁵, and a larger signalling system in place between Halifax and Annapolis²⁶.

The next author to build on the work of Thomas B. Akins is Thomas H. Raddall. Raddall’s accounts of Halifax, in both fiction and non-fiction, have shaped much of the modern interpretation of Halifax’s history. Mainly, his non-fiction history “Warden of the North” provided a historical narrative for Halifax following the shifts into post-war peace²⁷. There is undoubtedly a romantic twist of Halifax’s history written by Raddall but it also helps us understand how Haligonian’s were being presented Citadel Hill and its place in history going into the period of bylaw drafting for the viewplanes.

Raddall’s “Warden of the North” begins on a personal account (dated 1964) of his arrival and resulting love for Halifax²⁸. Their account of Halifax’s history, unlike Akins, is a chronological story of the settlement. Starting with a chapter titled “The Indians”²⁹, Raddall describes the evolution of the Halifax peninsula as a process of taming an idyllic landscape for the British Empire. He states French forces were “blind to [the harbours] value” despite the presence of French forces lead by Samuel D. Champlain in the area as early as 1604³⁰. By

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999.

²⁶ Akins, History of Halifax City, 1895

²⁷ Raddall, 2010.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Raddall, 2010, p. 3.

Raddall's accounts, the arriving Cornwallis expedition faced great opposition, against the establishment of the settlement both by landscape and Indigenous defenders. It is noteworthy how much emphasis Raddall puts on the landscape – its serene pastoral nature and its violent push back against colonial taming. Raddall writes in a classic “Man vs. nature” theme, framing the enemies of settlement (Read: Halifax and the Empire) as nature, the French, or the “Indians”³¹. This story of British conquering and the resulting triumph was the main historical narrative to the common citizen of Halifax during the period of viewplane establishment.

Part of the original value of the views of Citadel Hill was as a high situated signalling system for communication amongst defense structures. Raddall mentions signalling on the Citadel Hill in the following passage:

“In 1762 there was an alarm of French invasion, the last flicker of the war. The Engineer Bastide hastily dug trenches on the crest of Citadel Hill, threw up a battery at Point Pleasant, and erected a signal station on Thrum Cap”³²

This shows that the practice of signalling starts earlier than the 1789 reference by Akins. Unfortunately, there is no clarification of signalling type at the time. This does, however, further emphasize the network of defense systems in Halifax, and establishes their value early in the city's history. Raddall states that the defence preparations die down the following year as conflict settles, so we do not have an idea of when signalling became a continuous practice. The

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. Also note: Thrum Cap is the most seaward side of McNabs Island. Also of note is that while this is a very early reference to the utility of sight between Halifax landmarks, the 1974 bylaw opted out of the proposed McNabs Island viewplane in favor of development

above quote also serves to show how general defense infrastructure was handled in early Halifax: as an ad-hoc preparation in response to threat.

Citadel Hill's garrisons saw a resurgence again in 1776 in the shadow of the American revolution. Haligonian's were left coping with an influx of loyalist soldiers camping in and around Citadel Hill in preparations for a rumoured siege by George Washington³³. This was a huge shift for Halifax. A new crop of citizens with pro-monarchy sentiment descended upon the town with little to no direction other than "stay here". The soldiers eventually mostly left or resettled, but the mark of war had again altered the composition of the settlement. Following the American revolution, Halifax saw increased presence in soldiers, privateers, and prisoners. The resulting increase of conflict and resources lead to "(Citadel Hill being) crowned with a large octagonal blockhouse and a maze of trenches and earthworks stiffened with green hardwood"³⁴. This addition to the hill would be left to decay until the revitalization of the defense works by Prince Edward. By the end of the American Revolutionary War, Raddall sums up the military garrison as "fourteen forts, blockhouses, and barracks in and about the town proper"³⁵. This has massive implications for Halifax's built-environment. Halifax was a settlement of roughly 3000 people during this period³⁶, meaning the majority of structures and buildings were a result of military need, not homes or farms.

"When he came to Halifax in 1794 he found a struggling, shabby wooden town defended by the tumbledown remains of forts hastily throw up or repaired at the time of the American Revolution."

³³ Raddall, 2010, p. 76

³⁴ Ibid., p. 89

³⁵ Ibid., 88

³⁶ Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, 1999, p. 6. Population in 1767 was 3,685 and in 1791 was 3,932

The “he” in the above Thomas Raddall quote refers to Prince Edward, future father of Queen Victoria and a massive figure in the building of the Halifax defense network. His arrival, as stated by Raddall, coincided with a surge of activity in 1793 as tensions with the French began to grow again. As discussed with Akins, this period saw Prince Edward pushing heavy investment into the Halifax defense network formalizing the ad-hoc nature of Halifax’s defenses. Raddall notes that Prince Edward had no mind for money and spent carelessly to accomplish his vision³⁷.

Referring to it as “perhaps Edward’s greatest work”³⁸, Raddall describes the introduction of a telegraph system to North America in 1790’s. He explains that the British (back on the island) adopted a Swedish system with stations each having a 6 shuttered venetian-blind used to show off various patterns readable by telescope³⁹. Edwards engineers created their own system of “visual telegraphy” utilizing flags, black wickerwork balls, and drums for day signalling and lanterns for signalling at night⁴⁰. According to Raddall there were signal posts at Chebucto Head, York Redoubt, Citadel Hill and at the Dockyard⁴¹. Prince Edward utilized the posts heavily, having them report everything including “misdemeanours of soldiery”⁴². Edward also had a signalling station installed beside the Bedford Basin, next to his Rotunda⁴³, so that he could always be kept aware of the state of defense. This signalling system was the first of many such iterations over the next century and a half in Halifax, and were part of the military reasoning behind clear lines of sight between major installations.

³⁷ Raddall, 2010, p. 112.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 113.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Corfu, 2017. Note: Prince’s Lodge, the historic rotunda, still stands and is considered a valuable asset in Halifax’s built heritage

The Duke of Kent's telegraph chain had been abandoned and left to decay by 1802 as leadership changed hands and trained signallers disappeared⁴⁴. The next major surge in garrison activity came with the War of 1812: "At once there was a furious stir. (The Duke of) Kent's old earthworks and bastions on Citadel Hill were hastily repaired."⁴⁵

At this time the Martello Tower in Point Pleasant Park was repaired and a new Martello tower was constructed on Georges Island⁴⁶. Raddall mentions that garrisons in this period started having difficulties with the storage of explosive ordinance⁴⁷. John Sherbrooke, the now commander of the defense network, had a stone magazine constructed in Citadel Hill to store gun powder. Raddall refers to this storehouse as looming over Halifax like "Vesuvius over Pompeii"⁴⁸.

Following the war of 1812, Halifax began to assert itself as a town. Incorporation, held back by military leadership over concern of "downfall of the fortress"⁴⁹, meant a formal establishment of police force, court and jail systems for the town of Halifax. The settlement, up until this point, had mainly served as a military outpost at the whim of British command. This moment in Halifax saw the creation of a newer, more independent identity for the town as well as renewal of structures and infrastructure as a result of social organizing and some large fires.⁵⁰ This, according to Raddall, also came with the "abandonment of the garrison" and the "great financial frost" as trading and wartime investment waned⁵¹. It is appropriate that this period saw

⁴⁴ Raddall, 2010, p. 138.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 139

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 140.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 148.

⁵⁰ Raddall, 2010, p. 153.

⁵¹ Ibid.

the construction of Dalhousie University in the Grand Parade, which now serves as Halifax City Hall, as this was a period of building identity for Halifax.

The last major modification of Citadel Hill, the building of Fort George, began in 1829 lead by Colonel Gustavus Nicolls design and oversight⁵². Stated by Raddall as motivated by “The unrelenting hostility of the United States”, the British were under the assumption that their harbour stronghold would inevitably be attacked⁵³. The garrison had once again been left to decay as the demands of war either waned or relocated. The resulting design of Fort George was massive and faced many of the obstacles any Halifax developer would face today – mainly the freeze and thaw climate – but also had to be prepared for the wear and tear of war. The renovations spearheaded by Nicolls demolished the remains of previous forts and cut down the hill by 33 feet⁵⁴. The design, as you can experience today, took over 30 years to build, a far longer time than Nicolls original plan of 5 years⁵⁵. B

Nicolls’ design of Fort George was obsolete by the time it had finished⁵⁶. Technology and warfare evolution, mainly the introduction of rifling in artillery, made the defense of the fort wholly inadequate. It was probably Nicolls’ own words that best described the forts place by the time it was finished:“(In the end) It was more to show the flag than to bare the sword”⁵⁷

While the 1825 plans for Fort George took 30 years to finish, the surrounding town of Halifax began to thrive again. Shipping, ship building, and trade all began to thrive in peace and bring

⁵² Ibid., p. 161. Raddall also notes that the son of Benedict Arnold, Colonel James Robertson Arnold, began the early planning of this renovation of the fort.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 162.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999.

⁵⁷ Morrison, 1979.

capital to Halifax⁵⁸. In this time, steamships, particularly the Cunard ventures, grew into use⁵⁹ and Halifax incorporated in 1841⁶⁰. This period also saw the start of the public gardens amongst other projects that define Halifax today.

3.2 Incorporation, World Wars, and beyond

“The wharves are then crowded with vessels...Signals are constantly flying at the citadel for vessels coming in; merchants are running about, in anticipation of their freights”⁶¹

“Halifax: The First 250 Years,” released in 1999, bills itself as yet another successor to the written works of Raddall⁶². A compilation of three separate historians, the book takes a more contemporary look at the story of Halifax, adding more context for the stories of Raddall including more stories of women, African Nova Scotians and Indigenous people. They begin by talking about Raddall’s legacy, his story of Halifax as a Garrison, and how the city itself changed after Raddall published his original “Warden of the North” in the 1940’s⁶³. The book goes through an analysis of Halifax’s history and identity, rather than the story telling style of Akins or Raddall.

In the 1840’s, while the Nicolls’ Fort George renovation still continued to fight with ground stabilization, Halifax saw new life as a major shipping and trading port. The practice of

⁵⁸ Raddall, 2010, p. 163

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 174

⁶⁰ Ibid., 175

⁶¹ Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999

⁶² Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999, p. 5

⁶³ Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999, p. 5

signalling, still managed out of the half-complete Citadel garrison, was a language familiar to Haligonians seeking to understand the days arrivals, weather forecast, or time⁶⁴.



This image is a published guide to the potential merchants that would be signalled on the commercial mast⁶⁵

It was a conscious choice to keep the signalling system in place with Fort George. Colonel Nicolls chose to keep the system, rather than upgrade to a standardized Semaphore flag system⁶⁶, stating that he believed the changeover was too costly and that the black balls being used to signal in Halifax were easier seen in the fog⁶⁷. There was argument over the cost of the signalling system in 1857, with talk of ceasing its use, but public outcry led to the establishment of a

⁶⁴ Ibid., p 70

⁶⁵ "Signal Masts and Flags," 2017.

⁶⁶ "Semaphore," 2011. Semaphore flagging is a marine standard of signals and is sometimes used today in emergency situation

⁶⁷ Pacey, 1985

harbour tax to keep up the communication apparatus⁶⁸. The signalling system communicated messaging between Citadel, York Redoubt, Camperdown and Sambro Island as of 1861⁶⁹.

Judith Fingard's section in "Halifax: The First 250 Years" discusses the conflicts over the commons land during this period⁷⁰. Halifax, now incorporated and building itself outside of the context of war, was clashing with the military, which was determined to keep up their land claim to remain ready for war⁷¹. Troops, attempting to reassert their claim, knocked down a fence in the North Common in 1859, which led to negotiation with the city of Halifax over who could do what and where⁷². 20 Hectares surrounding the Citadel, plus 5 hectares given in 1830, in addition to the 3 hectares for Camp Hill was definitively the military's in the eyes of the city⁷³. According to Fingard, the council of the time "balked at the garrison's claim" of the North Commons. A memorandum of agreement was reached in 1860 leaving the North Commons untouched, but also unfenced, meaning it was still mainly public access⁷⁴. Fingard also notes that the South Common was quickly developed upon by the city, which was occupied with establishing social institutions such as hospital or public gardens⁷⁵.

19th Century Halifax fixated on social good through institutions and built environment⁷⁶. Fingard refers to this period as "age of commemoration"⁷⁷. Halifax saw an uptick in local ethnic societies which followed through to countless celebrations and events⁷⁸. Cultural shifts happened

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999, p. 76

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999, p. 76

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 82

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 83

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 85

in the later half of the 19th century too. This happened with the establishment of larger manufacturing groups, such as Starr Manufacturing, and the construction and Intercolonial Railway and the Intercolonial Deep Water Terminus – both of which accommodated the growing shipping and immigration numbers⁷⁹. Shifts for the Commons occurred again in 1899 as the Halifax Armoury was completed for use by military for practicing drills⁸⁰. The 19th Century was a strong time for Halifax to build itself up, and as Fingard notes: “By the end of the nineteenth century, Halifax was physically a much larger city than it had been a few decades ago and (sic) no longer dominated by Citadel Hill.”⁸¹

The 20th Century was a return to old habits for Halifax. Even with the withdrawal of British forces from the garrison in 1905 and 1906 the city still relied heavily on the armed forces as an employer⁸². Judith Fingard writes in “Halifax: the first 250 years “It (Halifax) emerged as the centre of manpower and operations for the regular component of the Canadian army.”⁸³

Canadian forces had to double their personnel to account for the manpower needs of the garrison infrastructure across Halifax⁸⁴. A surge in municipal identity building and public service occurred again in the early 20th century, with 1906 creation of “The Civic Improvement League”, who included the Board of Trade, women’s groups, churches, and architecture and planning professionals⁸⁵. Fingard also notes that sport and leisure grew into its own in Halifax during this time⁸⁶.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 95

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 99

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 116

⁸² Ibid., p. 120

⁸³ Ibid., p. 121

⁸⁴ Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999, p. 121

⁸⁵ Ibid., 122

⁸⁶ Ibid., 129

The Great War's arrival in 1914 had a huge impact on the daily life of a Haligonian. The harbour buzzed and the enlisted locals lived in a state of constant preparation. This chaotic harbour life calmed in 1918, but not before reshaping the city with the 1917 Halifax Explosion, which introduced massive urban changes with the Hydrostone development⁸⁷. Janet Guildford, the third of the three authors of "Halifax: The First 250 years" takes us into the post-war period of Halifax describing it as taking place between 2 explosions: The Halifax Explosion and the Victory Day riots of 1945⁸⁸. Halifax's inter-War period was not one of prosperity like elsewhere, but a depression and decay of employment⁸⁹. The Great Depression of the 1930's only continued to worsen the already dire economic conditions of the Maritimes. Guildford notes that a renewed Pier 21 immigration facility and the 1928 Halifax Port Commission on Maritime Claims both provided much needed work and energy to Halifax during this challenging time⁹⁰.

3.3 Shifting to Modernity

The beginnings of Citadel Hill's non-military future emerged in the 1920's and 30's with tourism becoming a proposed solution to the Maritimes economic shortcomings. Guildford cites the arrival of The Lord Nelson Hotel and the Nova Scotian Hotel as indicators in the influx of people coming to explore Halifax, additionally, the new rail station was constructed in the South End⁹¹. This uptick accompanied a renewed nostalgia in Halifax for Halifax's "Golden Age"⁹² of

⁸⁷ Ibid., 137

⁸⁸ Ibid., 138

⁸⁹ Ibid., 140

⁹⁰ Ibid., 145

⁹¹ Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999, p. 148

⁹² Ibid., p. 150

sail⁹³. This period marks the start of the major cultural underpinnings of the viewplane debate that would come in the 1960s and 70s.

Halifax contributed massive land and resources to the defense efforts of the Second World War⁹⁴. With decades of economic depression behind them and little support from the Federal government, Halifax gave everything it could for the war effort⁹⁵. Guildford describes it as having a “short-term economic impact” with “minimal long-term development”. Massive shortcomings in available housing, public transportation, and labour were all coped with during war time⁹⁶. This exploded into the previously mentioned May 8th, 1945 Victory Riots which had Haligonian’s allegedly protesting the cities hardships as much as the victory over the Axis⁹⁷. Overall, the estimated \$5,000,000 in damage caused by the riots was another cost to be made up as the city rebuilt itself (again) outside of the needs of war⁹⁸.

Janet Guildford describes post-war Halifax, celebrating its 200th anniversary in 1949, as “drab and war weary”⁹⁹. She also mentions, as we should note, that Halifax adopted their 1946 Master Plan to try and revitalize the city¹⁰⁰. The 1946 Master Plan looked to set the tone for the new Halifax, confronting the problems of wartime and trying to pull the city into the Post-War prosperity that Western Canada was experiencing¹⁰¹. The next several decades did not go as the plan intended, but did take on the spirit of Halifax trying to shape itself. Guildford mentions

⁹³ This nostalgia would bleed into the works of Helen Creighton, which would massively shape the identity of Nova Scotia for future tourism (Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999, p. 150)

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 152

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 154

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 156

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 157. Figure is given in 1945 currency

⁹⁹ Fingard, Guildford & Sutherland, 1999, p. 160

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 161

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

several city-shaping factors in mid-century Halifax that we should discuss, including¹⁰²the Federal Massey Commission¹⁰³, and the 1957 Redevelopment Study conducted by Gordon Stephenson¹⁰⁴.

3.3.1 Political context leading into the Bylaw

“Its (Halifax’s) growth has been responsive, and vulnerable, to the changing requirements of defence and the armed forces.”¹⁰⁵

In 1957 Halifax received the report they had commissioned from Toronto Planning Professor Gordon Stephenson¹⁰⁶. The report was meant to be a guide for urban renewal, which was seen as the next step in modernization of the city at the time. The report is mostly known for its role in slum clearance and the relocation of Africville, but outside of the mistakes of the period, Stephenson’s work formed much of the periods ideas of planning in Halifax. He was primarily informed by a planning paradigm that emphasized beauty and renewal (usually for the “common good”) and spoke of the beautiful views from Citadel Hill, believing his work would increase their value.

Stephenson’s report came out only 6 years after the recommendations of the Massey Commission in 1951¹⁰⁷. The commission, who’s stated goal was to define the “needs and desires of the citizen in relation to science, literature, art, music, the drama, films, broadcasting”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Ibid., 164.

¹⁰³ Not to be confused with General Massey of the late 1700’s, namesake for the now redeveloped Fort Massey (Raddall, 2010, p. 87)

¹⁰⁴ "A Redevelopment Study of Halifax, Nova Scotia.," 1957

¹⁰⁵ Sinclair, 1961.

¹⁰⁶ "A Redevelopment Study of Halifax, Nova Scotia.," 1957

¹⁰⁷ Government of Canada, 1951.

¹⁰⁸ Website Massey introduction

played a huge part in the post-war identity development of Canada (and, as follows, Halifax). Much debate can be had about the nationalism and policies of the report; but for the purpose of this study let us focus on some major outcomes: the emphasis on historic sites and monuments¹⁰⁹, the urge for Federal support of historical societies and groups¹¹⁰, the endorsement of UNESCO¹¹¹, and the direct calls to action surrounding Citadel Hill, mainly:

“Recommendation J: That special and immediate provision be made to stem the progressive delapidation (sic) of the Halifax Citadel and of the Cavalier Barracks within its walls; that for this purpose the care of the Citadel be transferred forthwith from the Department of National Defence to the National Parks Service; that special appropriations by the Federal Government be made, without prejudice to other projects recommended by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, so that the Halifax Citadel may be suitably restored progressively over the next few years, if possible through the co-operation of the Municipality, the Province and the Federal Government.”¹¹²

The Massey recommendations lead to the ownership changes of Citadel Hill (and Fort George) during the 1950s. The Department of National Defense transferred ownership of the Citadel to the Department of Resources and Development on May 16th, 1951¹¹³. The garrison received

¹⁰⁹ Government of Canada, 1951. also: “We believe, however, that the time has now come for a considerable expansion of this programme and for some modification of policy. We conceive that, without neglecting the important material consideration of attracting the tourist, the principal object of the Board should be to instruct Canadians about their history through the emotional and imaginative appeal of associated objects. Factual information can be obtained in books; the function of the monument or marker is, we assume, to convey a sense of the reality of the past. We do not ignore the entertainment value; but we consider the enjoyment of national history to be a form of entertainment not sufficiently familiar to Canadians.”

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations. Of note as well is a letter of endorsement from the Nova Scotia Teachers Union for Canadian participation in UNESCO. (Nova Scotia Teachers Union, 1949)

¹¹² Government of Canada, 1951.

¹¹³ Pacey, 1985.

stabilization work and was reopened to the public as a National Historic Park in 1956, starting its new life as a monument and destination¹¹⁴. This would lead us to the 1960s and 70s fight for the viewplanes of Citadel Hill.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

4.0 Analysis

“Do we have to strike a bargain to accommodate views, historic buildings and future development in the Central Business District (CBD)?”¹¹⁵

The years leading up to establishment of the 1974 Viewplane bylaw were filled with public debate, consultation, and persistent activism regarding the future of the view. The debate was a clash of values and future projections for Halifax where one side was occupied with a Modernist vision of the future filled with skyscrapers and economic prosperity, and the other fixated on honouring the history of Halifax and keeping Halifax outside of the periods’ ideals of progress. It is a gross oversimplification of the debate to view its complexities this way, but these two positions represent the most polarized (and vocal) views that arose while determining the future of the viewplanes. Primary source documents, such as Op-Ed’s or news articles, show us how the viewplanes were discussed in the lead up to their regulation. The conversation of the time is not all that dissimilar to debates seen in Halifax today concerning narratives of progress vs. commemoration in our built environment.

The following description of the events of the bylaw and onward will be informed by groups such as Halifax City Council, The Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, The Urban Development Institute, and the Downtown Business Association. Each of these groups have their own biases and goals for the future of the city, and each of them were actively lobbying elected officials and the public over the future of viewplane regulation at the time.

¹¹⁵ Pacey, 1973. Note that the article incorrectly states her name as “Elizabeth Pace”

4.1 Citadel Inn

In her book “The Battle of Citadel Hill”, Elizabeth Pacey attempts to describe the events leading up to the fight over the viewplanes in council¹¹⁶. Pacey, an on and off member of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia, wrote her account of the legislation in 1979 leaving a public record of her perspective of the events of the viewplanes. With her authorial flair for the dramatic, she gets into the events of the Citadel Inn with a chapter titled “The Citadel Inn Skirmish”¹¹⁷. The Citadel Inn renovation and resulting opposition is the catalyst for viewplane protection¹¹⁸. Other buildings, such as the Royal Centre¹¹⁹ and the Bank of Montreal Building¹²⁰ had brought about concern with their heights being 13 and 17 storeys respectively.¹²¹ The one-upmanship of the Bank of Montreal Tower over The Royal Centre was rightfully a cause for concern, as the banks had acted to make sure their branding was clearly visible to those looking out on the harbour from Citadel Hill.¹²² This, combined with the aggressive urban renewal policies that lead to the massive development proposals for Scotia Square, meant that Haligonians were facing down massive urban height changes with no regulation to slow the construction boom and the literal race to the top.

¹¹⁶ Pacey, 1985.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Announced in 1965, completed in 1968 (Pacey, 1985) and Located at 5161 George Street

¹²⁰ Announced in 1969, completed 1971 (Pacey, 1985)

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Pacey, 1985



The Citadel Inn was located at the corner of Brunswick Street and Cogswell Street. Built in 1963, it was a low-lying auto-motel that capitalized on its location to serve visitors and tourists.¹²⁴ The inn's low height did not interfere with the view from the Citadel Hill to the North-East when it was built in 1962. It was the 1971 proposal of developer Ralph Medjuck to add an additional 8 storeys that lead to concern from local activists¹²⁵. As Pacey notes, initially there were issues with how this renovation would conflict with the planned Police station next-door, but those concerns were quickly overshadowed by the municipal election of October 20th, 1971¹²⁶.

Developer Ralph Medjuck, whom Pacey claims was taking advantage of a new council, submitted revised plans for the Citadel Inn renovation that were brought to council in December 1971 (described as a “blow” by Pacey).¹²⁷ The revised addition went from 8 storeys to 11 (a 50 foot difference), significantly altering the impact to the view from Citadel Hill.¹²⁸ Council, after

¹²³ “Five Hiltons in SilverBirch Hotel Pipeline,” 2013.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Pacey, 1985. Also while 8 storeys was what municipal staff were presented, Medjuck was infamous for slipping in extra height on proposals after the fact, as he did with his work on Scotia Square (Pacey, 1985)

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

deliberation on the original proposed height and the new plans for 11 storeys decided to put the height of 8 storeys up to public debate.

4.2 The Public and the Press

Examining the discourse in the papers of the time gives a view into the concerns of the public about Citadel Hill's viewplanes and their reasons for supporting or opposing the proposed protections. The Halifax Mail-Star¹²⁹ issue of January 10th, 1972 marked the first of several years' worth of back and forth debate on how the city of Halifax should proceed. The piece, titled "How High the Inn" was in response to the debated Citadel Inn renovations:

"The magnificent view of the harbour which was revealed when the old centre of the city was razed, is being steadily reduced by high-rise office towers and apartment buildings which have sprung up below the foot of Citadel Hill. What effect, then, will expansion of Citadel Inn to a height of ten storeys have on the view from the top of Fort George?"¹³⁰

For a curmudgeonly letter to the newspaper this early response to the debate is surprisingly adept at framing the oncoming problem, mainly, what is being saved and is it worth it? The author demands council give it serious thought.

4.3 Council, January 13th 1972

Council met to discuss the Citadel Inn development proposal on January 13th, 1972.

With the proposed addition being public for the previous month, public concern about the

¹²⁹ The period's paper of record

¹³⁰ "How High The Inn?," 1972.

viewplanes had started to grow. Council decided, in a 6 to 4 vote from the Aldermen, to defer the decision to “allow more interested parties to make their views known on the matter”¹³¹. Mail-Star Journalist John O’Brien reported that some Alderman were opposed due to concerns about the viewplanes, while others worried about the large structure next to the planned police station, and those in support generally agreed that the plan was within the allowable law and would help with a lack of available hotel rooms¹³². O’Brien’s article also mentions the letter from the Acting Regional Director for the National and Historic Parks Maritimes Branch – P.A. Thomson.

The letter from P.A. Thomson, dated January 13th, 1972, tried to argue about the value of the views while reminding council of the 700,000 visits the historic site had received the previous year and finishes with:

“This is also an appropriate time to urge council to establish acceptable development controls to ensure that future downtown development will not encroach further upon this historic setting.”¹³³

This letter is one of the most important documents concerning the Citadel Hill viewplanes. It not only shows the impetus from federal powers for action, but also captures the crux of much of the conversation concerning the viewplanes – mainly that the argument begins with tourism and viewing pleasure and finished with a vague mention of heritage value. Pacey and the Heritage Trust members argue for the viewplanes from a heritage conservation perspective, but businesses, developers and officials remain fixated on protection of views from Citadel Hill rather than views to Citadel Hill that would match the historic precedent of signaling for

¹³¹ O’Brien, 1972.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ P. A. Thomson to Mayor Walter Fitzgerald, 1972.

mariners and townspeople. The letters primary argument is of Citadel Hill's national value as a historic attraction, with the insistence being that the views were part of this appeal. This also is consistent under the National Historic Sites recognition that the views were a contributing heritage asset towards the heritage value of Citadel Hill and Fort George.

4.4 Public objection

Following the council deferral of the Citadel Inn renovation, the general public really began to engage with the issue of the views. Within a week of council deferral, the Mail-Star published another public piece titled "Citadel Controls Needed"¹³⁴. While the content of the letter was nothing new – making mention of P.A.Thomson's objections and the results of the January 13th council meeting - it marked the start of the public's notion that the views should be protected by the city. The letter also notes the proposed height of 11 storeys on the Inn is "higher than the hill itself"¹³⁵, something that is long gone today but really helps us understand that Halifax valued being able to see over the city from the hill during the period. A note of caution is left on the end, with the author arguing that the Red Cross "building on the north-east slope had become an invasion"¹³⁶. The use of militarized language is a common occurrence within the debates of Citadel Hill, partly due to its history, but also because people felt that developers were attacking a public good by building within the views.

¹³⁴ "Citadel Controls Needed.," 1972.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶O'Brien, 1972b

4.5 Early Reporting

John O'Brien, a reporter for the Mail-Star, wrote much of the city hall coverage early in the conversation. In their piece on January 18th, 1972 they cover the conversation from the "considerable amount" of people present to comment on the Citadel Inn renovation¹³⁷. Mr. Napier¹³⁸, the project architect, spoke first. His concerns were mainly focused on the abutting police station, with him being quoted as saying the hotel developer had a "moral commitment" to consider them in the process¹³⁹.

Mr. Thomson¹⁴⁰, building on their arguments from the January 13th letter, argues similarly in the piece. Thomson argues that the 151 degree sweep between the Angus L. MacDonald Bridge and the spire on St. Mary's Basilica has only been interrupted in 2 places by the "Main post office building"¹⁴¹ and by the Old Clock Tower¹⁴² ten years ago. He is also quoted saying:

"The Centennial Building now hides five degrees; The Royal Bank of Canada and The Bank of Montreal, eight degrees; twin towers of Scotia Square, 14 degrees; Scotia Square apartment towers, 12 degrees. The panoramic view has been cut one-third in total."¹⁴³

Thomson proceeded to point out that he believes that it makes no sense to have the Citadel "unless there was a view of the harbour" and he again urges council to commit to height controls. "Height controls" is interesting terminology for the time as that language does not come

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Also the architect for the Police station

¹³⁹ O'Brien, 1972b.

¹⁴⁰ Acting Regional Director for the National and Historic Parks Maritimes Branch

¹⁴¹ The Dominion Public Building on 1713 Bedford Row

¹⁴² Ibid. Thomson states that the post office building took 8 degrees, while the clocktower took 3.

¹⁴³ Ibid

back into use until the 1980s when viewplane activists get concerned about the Spring Garden Road area developing upward.

O'Brien's article then covers the words of Lou Collins¹⁴⁴ who is upset that there has been no consideration of the Landmarks Commission when deciding to develop within the Citadel Views. Collins again calls for "height controls" and view protection¹⁴⁵. Also present were representative of the Urban Development Institute (UDI) who says that in their general opinion view protection would be beneficial. Overall the first public voices on the issue were in favour of protections, and their reasoning was a mix of heritage, tourism, and general enjoyment of the view.

4.6 Council January 27th, 1972

Only a few weeks after the public hearing on the Citadel Inn renovation (that became about the views) council met again to try and come to some decision concerning moving forward with the proposal. The results were mixed - The Citadel Inn renovation was given the go-ahead, but council decided to engage staff on determining how the views could be protected moving

¹⁴⁴Collins is a history unto himself in Halifax. The description of the Lou Collins fonds in the Halifax Archives states: "Collins was chair of the City of Halifax's Civic Advisory Committee on the Preservation of Historic Buildings and helped establish its successor, the Halifax Landmarks Commission, which he also chaired for a number of years. Later he was a member of the Heritage Advisory Committee and the Halifax Foundation. Collins' extensive involvement in heritage societies and associations across the province included tenure as President of the Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society and membership on several boards including those of the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. For his heritage preservation efforts, Collins received a number of awards, among them an honorary doctorate from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1979, the Heritage Canada Lieutenant-Governor's Gold Medal in 1981 (with his wife Pamela), and investiture in the Order of Canada in 1996. Collins was appointed Honorary Civic Historian for the City of Halifax from 1968-1996" ("Lou Collins fond, n.d.)

¹⁴⁵ Fleury, 2017.

forward. The attempted motion by Alderman MacKeen to defer decision until the staff had studied the issue was defeated¹⁴⁶.

4.6.1 Protecting the Views

The decision to begin the process of protecting the views occurred on January 27th, 1972. The first view protection bylaw, put into place almost exactly 2 years later on January 31st, 1972¹⁴⁷, was the culmination of several years of debate and processing. Throughout this time, several progress reports were published on the process. The second report, meant for the Halifax Landmarks Commission, states:

“Since April 1965, well over one million dollars have been expended by the Federal government on capital projects involving restorations on the Citadel. It is anticipated that the Citadel restoration efforts will continue in the future, returning it to the appearance it had in 1855-60. More than one quarter of a million dollars annually are spent on the operation and maintenance of this historic park.

“The view” is clearly a significant part of the reason why people go to the Halifax Citadel. In 1973 there were approximately 700,000 visitors to this park; about 325,000 of them visited within the fortification itself. A great majority of the remaining 375,000 people toured the summit simply to take in the magnificent view. And why not? The slopes of the Halifax Citadel provide people an excellent opportunity to look at Halifax and its harbour. With a sweep of the eye one can see numerous artifacts of the City's history

¹⁴⁶ O'Brien, 1972c.

¹⁴⁷ City of Halifax, 1974.

*which still remain today, and can visualize over two hundred years of the City's growth and development.*¹⁴⁸

Some telling language is in this passage. Firstly, similar to the initial conversation, there is a focus on the value of the views for visitors or tourists. Historical use, particularly the historical use of signalling and weather communication, is absent. The “200 years of growth and development” stands out as well, the views were being interpreted as a photograph of progress to be seen, not as something that once held significant value to the operation of defense or commerce. The Federal capital invested, part of the earlier mentioned recommendations of the Massey Commission, also plays a key role in justifying the actions of the view protection.

Included in Progress Report #2 is the concern about viewing from automobiles. The report concludes with a bulleted list of priorities and ongoing issues, of which the first is:

“The public should have the right to enjoy views to Halifax Harbour from the roadway surrounding the fortification”¹⁴⁹

Which is also supplemented by the bullet:

“People should have the right to a good view while driving their cars around the roadway”¹⁵⁰

This was in response to an ongoing debate about where to set the viewplanes from. As a product of the triangular plane methodology used, a decision had to be made about where the two edge lines of a given plane met. Initially, the proposal played with the idea of setting the views

¹⁴⁸ City of Halifax, n.d.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

from the top of the fortification, but concerns about safety and crumbling infrastructure had staff reconsider¹⁵¹. The emphasis remained on the view as a thing to be consumed and enjoyed by people recreationally.

A 1973 memo to council¹⁵² makes explicate note of public concern about being able to see the harbour from Citadel Hill. Staff summarizes what they have heard as people wanting to be able to see “ships, the ferry, sailboats” and having a desire to experience a “townscape” - which they define as “Sky, water, low-scaled buildings and the occasional spire”. Council had to balance this feedback with the voices of the Downtown Business Association and the Board of Commerce, both of whom were pushing for height in development. A December 1973 “Commercial News” publication by the Board of Commerce frames the issue as:

“Once the by-law is brought into effect we all hope to have a workable by law that will not only preserve views but also permit the proper development of our downtown core.”

The argument from the development side of Halifax relied on the idea that skyscraper progress was inevitable. The Board of Commerce also notes that “Halifax does not have a business park”, which they use to justify the need for high-rise development¹⁵³.

4.6.2 Council 1974

On January 31, 1974 Council finally met with a bylaw proposal in front of them. The “View Bylaw” was a built on a methodology that protected 4 different viewing points from Citadel Hill with 10 different viewplanes divided amongst them¹⁵⁴. Several members of council

¹⁵¹ City of Halifax, n.d.

¹⁵² “Memo to Council,” 1973.

¹⁵³ “A Views By-Law?,” 1973.

¹⁵⁴ “Halifax City Council Minutes,” 1974a.

and the mayor felt it necessary to state that the draft in front of them was a good compromise that required give on both sides of the issue. With councils vote the viewplanes of Halifax were cast in the way they exist presently, with the inclusion of the alterations made on March 14th, 1974¹⁵⁵. The amendments made, just 2 months after the initial bylaw, were to accommodate the needs of the in-development project at the end of Spring Garden Road on Robie Street - The Maritime Centre.

4.7 After effects

Despite the mayor's approving words about the compromise scenario put in place objection to the viewplanes lingered. Ian Thompson of the Mail-Star writes on March 5th, 1974 "The Storm is beginning to gather around the cities proposed views bylaw"¹⁵⁶. Objections from the Urban Development Institute and National Sea Products were both discussed with the solicitor. National Sea Products representative stated he would oppose it based on "Planning Act 52" because they believed it was not in the cities financial interest¹⁵⁷. A Mail-Star article published on March 14th, 1974 describes the Urban Development Institutes plans to appeal the bylaw to the Province. No substantive appeal moved forward from either group.

Outside of the lingering objections from 1974, the viewplanes intent and purpose would not be on the political table until well into the 1980s. Similar debates about view preservation came about in the form of height controls in the Spring Garden Area as development eyed the renewal of the shopping district¹⁵⁸. Some conversation also re-emerged during the 2009 "HRM

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Thompson, 1974.

¹⁵⁷ Thompson, 1974.

¹⁵⁸ "Planning Advisory Committee Public Meeting Minutes.," 1985

by Design” consultation process. HRM By Design sought to reimagine the core of Halifax and re-orient the cities development post-amalgamation. The lead planner for the process, Andy Fillmore, is quoted as saying “People did not foresee the impact (the viewplanes) would actually have”¹⁵⁹.

¹⁵⁹ Raddall, 2010.

5.0 Conclusion

Citadel Hills views are a Halifax treasure. They open up perspective, they tie us to the enormity of our colonial development, and they allow residents and visitors the privilege of looking upon sea. What they do not do, however, is honour historical practices that once relied on the line of site. The Halifax viewplanes were protected as a matter of tourism and pleasure; which are totally valid reasons but separated from the historical argument one may be tempted to make. From the letter from P.A.Thomson citing visitor numbers, to the media discussion worried about economic development during the period, to the fights had amongst Alderman; the views historic use was recognized, but was not the driving reasoning behind their preservation. As a matter of development control and preserved sightseeing the existing bylaw stands as a beneficial tool for Halifax planners, but if pushed to discuss the historic merits of the bylaw there is little direct connection to be made. While the protected views give tribute to that past, the practices of weather signalling, time-keeping, or merchant arrival signals are barely part of the conversation when discussing Citadel Hill. The closest we get is the unflappable tradition of the Noon Gun which, like the signalling practices once did, acts as a central beat to the daily ins and outs of a busy Maritime port.

Halifax has undoubtedly been shaped by the viewplane bylaw. Developers and Urban Planners can still argue about the merits of the rule, but they have successfully accomplished what their methodology set out to do - keep the views from a few key points clear from large development. The viewplanes are protected to honour the past, the signalling history, and the defense complex's line of sight for coming invaders. The process of this preservation was conflated with the consumption of the views, mainly the drive of tourism that was assumed to be associated with historic site. While the outcomes of the methods used may not fully encapsulate

that reasoning, they stand as an attribution to Halifax's heritage. With success and failure, the viewplanes have kept portions of Citadel Hill's sightlines clear from encroaching development and allowed small glimpses into the historic Halifax. The struggle of the views, heritage and development will continue, but for now the chosen views of Halifax harbour remain to be enjoyed.

6.0 Recommendations

Given the volatile and long discussions that resulted from the initial viewplanes, it is difficult for me to recommend re-opening those discussions – but I do. Moving forward Halifax should seek public input on the fate of the viewplanes, while making sure the context and use of them is given to the deciding public. There is opportunity to make these discussions a celebration of the past as much as a plan for the future. This work should also include the several government stakeholders, especially Parks Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia.

Halifax should also consider better interpretation or teaching of the merchant signals that once helped average citizens know who was arriving at port. While researching this report I had initially considered the viewplanes as intangible cultural heritage (ICH), but found that ICH was generally defined as a practice or tradition. The signalling language of Halifax is an endangered ICH, with little work existing to preserve it. It is doubtful the flags and lantern system of the Duke of York will ever be re-discovered, but we can take steps to keep the 18th century flagging and weather signalling language of Nova Scotia alive for future generations.

Overall, I recommend revisiting why we chose to protect the viewplanes, and getting a strong idea of what the public would support, and where we would be able to work opportunities

into the existing framework. The viewplanes are something to be treasured, but like any heritage it needs to be a cooperative understanding of something we all share.

6.1 Further analysis

This work is a start to many bigger questions concerning origins and long-term sustainability of the viewplanes. Further work concerning the role of Modernism and resistance to change in Halifax during the period may enlighten the debates in a broader context. The role of tourism and heritage tourism could be analyzed, especially from an economic perspective. This work did not touch on any of the history of consultation and enforcement of the viewplanes from Parks Canada, nor did it reach into the heated debate about views during the planning and construction of the convention centre. The scope of this work sought to answer why the viewplanes were protected, all conversations about the consequences are yet to be written.

6.2 What if?

With Halifax's intentions of protecting the views for heritage, we should briefly explore the other ways the same goal could have been accomplished with a methodology that compromises less on the townscape ideal some citizens sought out. One possibility discussed early in the process of protections was height controls. A cap on the height of all development surrounding Citadel Hill would have provided a clear ceiling over the city for people to look out upon the landscape of Halifax. This would have possibly sent height-focused development elsewhere besides the peninsula, skewing the core of commerce outside of the historic town area. This would have been especially interesting following amalgamation as Dartmouth or Bedford may have offered better opportunity for large development projects. The emphasis on a low and historical Halifax would broaden Halifax's interpretation as a historical landscape. Leading to a

larger onus on heritage properties to fit in with the aesthetic of an older city to work within the living heritage site.

A preservation of the historical skill of signalling would likely have played out how one sees crafts hobbyists today - with a centralized group keeping the tradition alive within a provided space. Similar to how boatbuilding is fostered within the Maritime Museum, the Citadel Hill could provide a space for enthusiasts to practice and share signalling. Especially between sites like Georges Island and Fort George where the city could be a background to historical re-enactment.

Opportunities to experience this history in context still exist. While the viewplanes and their methodology have locked in very specific slices of views, we can decide to take advantage of those remaining bits of historic Halifax and bring a living practice of heritage back to Citadel Hill in old and new ways.

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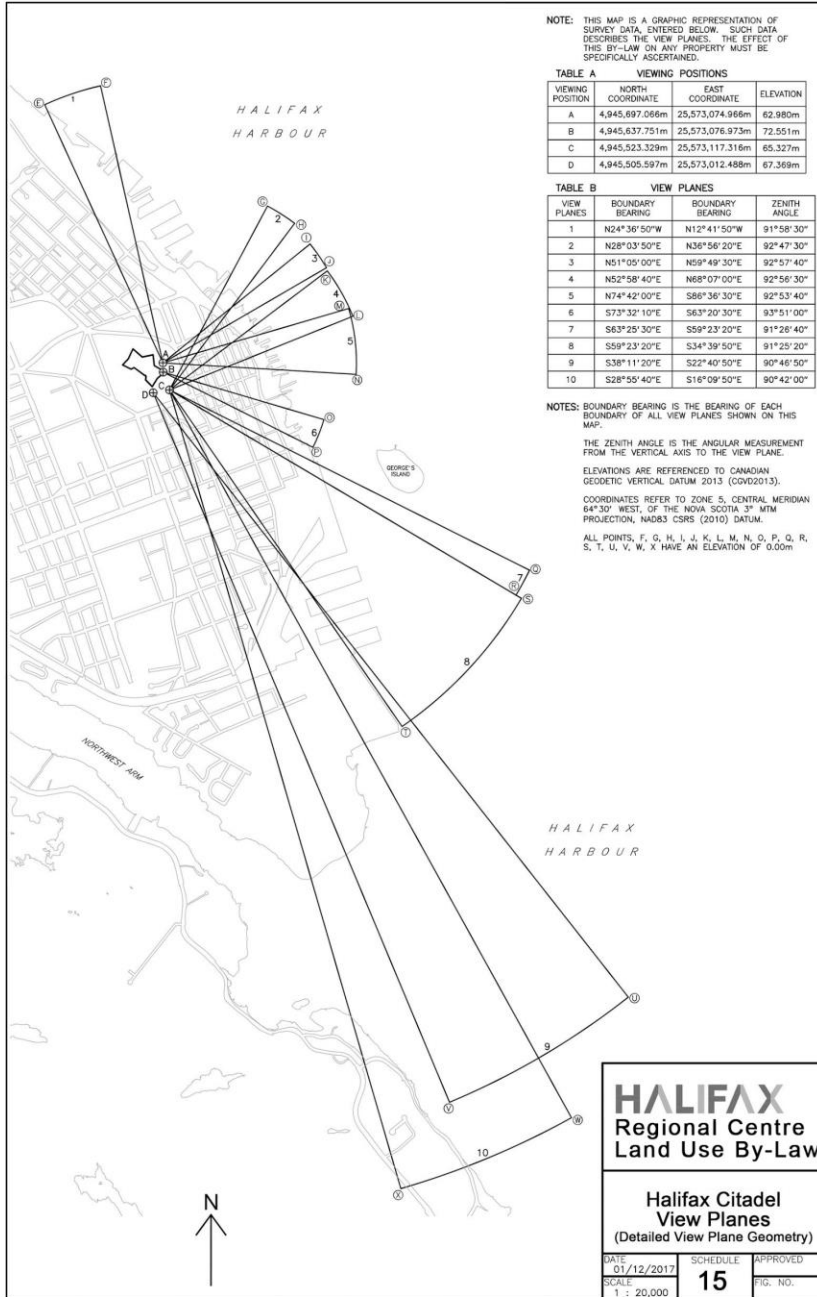
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Appendix



Halifax Regional Municipality. “Land Use Bylaw Viewplane Map” (2017)

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