

Peterborough Library – 1833 Committee

Recommendation for Library location

May 21, 2012

Summary Recommendation

Based on our study of four alternative site locations presented to the Library Trustees at the last meeting, and the subsequent discussion at the meeting, we would like to make our recommendation to the Board of Trustees that we believe the existing Peterborough Library site is the best location for a new Library Facility for the Town.

A summary of the key thoughts and conclusions regarding each of the four site locations follows:

Existing Peterborough Town Library Site

- The current location would maintain historical continuity as the Town Library building. It would also enable the most integrated use of the much beloved original iconic structure, as well as continuing the efficiencies related to the Kyes-Sage facility.
- The current site is highly visible; there is an opportunity to enhance this visibility by providing an inviting vista from the center of downtown, thereby strengthening the visual character as seen from the retail areas of downtown.
- The current site is already owned by the Town. This retains simplicity in project scope and scale, relative to the complexity inherent in the other alternatives. In addition this enables a straightforward approach for the fundraising effort from potential donors for the new facility.
- The current site has adequate space for on-site parking. Providing this convenience is an important site consideration for the majority of Library users.
- Another prime amenity of the site is its riverbank location. This is an opportunity that suggests a design scheme that lives up to this potential.
- Past architectural studies and community meetings for a new facility at this site location could be beneficial in defining issues for the future design work for this site.

Guernsey Building Site

- The sheer size of the building dictates a mixed use project of which the library would only be a part; this creates a complexity for ownership and maintenance issues, as well as the scope of building renovations invoked by mixed use and change of use code issues. Of the four sites, this is clearly the most complex, taking on much more than the new library facility alone.

- Extensive renovations and some additions to the base building would be needed to truly realize the opportunities for a new library facility for Peterborough.
- Of the four sites, this site has the least visible location.

Peterborough Historical Society Site & Building- New Addition and Building Integration

- Although an intriguing idea with good visibility, and a pragmatic idea of sharing resources, there will be significant complexity involved with an attempt to combine a private non-profit institution and a new public library facility on the same site, and share parts of the existing building. (This site option envisioned a significant 'Addition' on the property to primarily house the new library.) Similar to the Guernsey building, but more limited in scope, this will add a layer of complex issues to the project, including building and property ownership, shared maintenance, and the potential for increased project scope related to shared facilities with the historical society.
- Existing out buildings and tenants would also have to be relocated to create space for the Addition. Accessing all of the optimum area on the site may need to involve adjacent property owners.
- On site parking is a weakness of this location and would likely need to involve adjacent building owners for an adequate solution.

Centertown Site

- More straightforward than the two previous sites discussed, as well as offering a quality central location, this site would seem to be the second most viable. One of its significant weaknesses is lack of adequate on-site parking; this is followed by the size and shape of the parcel, which affects the available building footprint.
- An additional concern related to using this site for a new library facility is displacing the existing retail space (presently unoccupied), and existing professional and office space. Although the character of the existing building could use improvement, it should be acknowledged that the existing building is fulfilling an important need of reasonably priced tenant space in the downtown area. From a planning perspective, the use of this site as retail, professional space, and office space is perhaps the 'highest and best use' of this location.