

Valley Technology Innovation Centre

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The primary mandate of this unbuilt project was to create a concept design for a Technology Innovation Centre in the heart of the historic town of Wolfville, Nova Scotia. The site is located in the Dykelands Business Park District, overlooking the Minas Basin, where strict planning and design guidelines govern all new development initiatives. The design guidelines, developed by Robert Parker and Associates for the Town of Wolfville, strive to preserve the traditional, industrial character of the Town's apple warehouses and turn-of-the-century buildings, while preserving the strong vistas and visual landscape of the open dykelands.

The architectural language of the unbuilt Valley Technology Innovation Centre attempted to reconcile the burgeoning tension between a historically-themed design, and progressive, modern (high-tech) architecture. The design placed emphasis on flexibility of occupancy usage within a variety of volumetric space types and services; while accommodating a mixture of office, soft-industrial, and heavy-industrial occupancies. All of these elements were consolidated into an architectural ensemble, whose language reflected the historic spirit and rich, architectural heritage of the town of Wolfville.

The proposed building form was "L-shaped," consisting of a two-storey office wing, and a single-storey industrial wing. The building's design accommodated future expansion towards the north and west directions, by occupying the southwest corner of the lot.

The plan was organized around a central, balconied, atrium/reception area, featuring a fully-glazed entrance portico, balcony galley, and access to a rear courtyard and deck.

The office wing was to be serviced by an elevator and two stairwells, and featured a loop corridor system akin to modern office buildings. Offices were organized towards the fenestrated exterior walls, and common facilities were housed within the core.

The industrial wing featured a double-loaded corridor, which served industrial bays (with mezzanine), and soft industrial spaces,

with optional individual entries. Each industrial bay was to have high, sloped ceilings; a large, retractable overhead door; and removable guardrail mezzanines for heavy storage loading.

The exterior design featured traditional, wood-clapboard siding; steep, patched, gabled facades; and asphalt shingles. The design also acknowledged the progressive occupancy of the building, by featuring transparent, glazed, curtain walls; metal stairs and decks; and round, stucco-clad, columns.

Landscape design consisted of earth-mound berms, densely planted with wild rose and ground cover. The landscaping berms and cover were to evoke the open, unobstructed quality of the immediate dykelands area. All service elements were to be visually screened with landscaping.

In summary, the concept design for the Valley Technology Innovation Centre strived to create an environment for innovation and modern technology, within an architectural narrative that is based on the historical themes of traditional Wolfville architecture. To date, this project remains unbuilt; it is still undergoing financial review and assessment by the Client.

