



King's awards new building design to Diamond Schmitt Architects in association with Abbott Brown

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In an exciting next step that will shape the university's future and serve the greater Halifax community, King's is moving forward with its plans to redevelop and revitalize the southeast corner of its campus by awarding the building's design contract to leading Canadian architectural firm [Diamond Schmitt](#) in association with [Abbott Brown](#).

Recognized for its bold, responsive design solutions developed with a humanist approach, Diamond Schmitt's extensive portfolio of work includes over 150 academic facilities for 60 post-secondary clients across North America. The firm has been awarded seven Canadian Governor General's Awards for Architecture and is recognized for its ability to respect heritage buildings across historical campuses while re-imagining them for the emerging pedagogies of the 21st century.

"We're excited to work with King's and its wider community in realizing this transformational project. The project brings together the School of Journalism, Writing and Publishing, athletics and new residences in an innovative, sustainably driven facility for the 21st century. It will create a crossroads where academic excellence, health and wellness, together with on-campus living, enhance the university experience and student life," says Martin Davidson, Principal at Diamond Schmitt. "Building on the legacy of King's campus, the project significantly expands its engagement with the wider community, African Nova Scotians and the Mi'kmaq in providing an open and inclusive architecture that will be a welcoming beacon to all."

The first phase of the project, funded by a \$1 million gift from King's Chancellor Debra Deane Little and her husband Bob Little, will include extensive internal and external community dialogues that will inform concept drawings and pre-design work.

So they can create a new space that is truly welcoming to all, the design team comprises a diverse group of professionals organized under the leadership of Diamond Schmitt Architects, including the firm's principals, Martin Davidson, Donald Schmitt and Cecily Eckhardt. Jane Abbott and Alec Brown, principals at the Halifax firm Abbott Brown, bring to the plan their extensive experience in public and heritage projects in Nova Scotia and a deep understanding of local Maritime context and conditions. Their team includes Sophia Horwitz and Greg Woolner, Co-directors of [COLAB](#), who will act as public engagement facilitators and will advise on the consultation process. [Village Consulting](#) will provide sustainability leadership to help guide the project. [Kate MacDonald](#), an African Nova Scotian community facilitator, and Indigenous Liaison Gary Joseph Goodstriker of Big River Cree First Nation, who has been part of the

Sipekne'katik First Nation for 30 years, round out the engagement team to ensure we create an inclusive environment where all members of our community can thrive.

“We’re thrilled to work with Diamond Schmitt, Abbott Brown and the experts they have brought together for our project,” says William Lahey, King’s President and Vice-Chancellor. “We look forward to the dialogues and discussions the team will conduct within and beyond King’s to create a state-of-the-art facility that reflects the rich history of Mi’kma’ki, as well as the history of King’s. Our goal in this project is to strongly put our acknowledgement that we are on unceded Mi’kmaq land into action, and to strengthen our relationships with African Nova Scotian communities. Together, we’ll create a fully accessible space that moves King’s toward net-zero goals and confirms King’s leadership in the education of journalists and creative writers, the provision of supportive and affordable student housing and collegiate and community sports and recreation.”

Plans for the brand-new 140,000 square-foot (130,006 square-metre) multi-use building include a residence that will double the affordable housing options for King’s students living on campus. The facility will also serve as a dynamic new hub for the School of Journalism, Writing & Publishing (including Canada’s first centre for excellence in podcasting) and a modern gymnasium and wellness centre for King’s flourishing athletics program and community groups that rely on the university’s recreational facilities.

King’s has been a place of innovation and distinction since its founding in 1789. Its history and future are inexorably intertwined with the history and future of the province that gives it a home. The Southeast Corner Project at the University of King’s College is poised to shape the institution’s future by embodying its commitment to educational excellence and community integration within a 21st-century context. This new building will foster a vibrant center for journalism, writing and publishing, and serve as a dynamic hub for students, faculty, and the Halifax community to engage in athletics, learning and cultural activities.

About the University of King’s College

Established in 1789, King's College is Canada's oldest chartered university and is associated with Dalhousie University. A small and extraordinarily lively academic community located in Halifax (Kjipuktuk), Nova Scotia, King's is known nationally and internationally for its highly acclaimed interdisciplinary programs in the humanities, including its renowned Foundation Year Program, its professional programs in journalism and its fine arts programs in creative writing.

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About Diamond Schmitt

Diamond Schmitt is a global architecture firm that designs transformative, purpose-driven, and highly sustainable buildings across sectors. Delivering innovative architecture that empowers people, communities, and organizations to harness change for the greater public good, Diamond Schmitt employs a collaborative research process to create bold designs recognized for their exceptional performance, meticulous craftsmanship and versatility of space. The firm has designed academic spaces for renowned post-secondary institutions across North America—including the Emily Carr University of Art + Design in Vancouver, the Peter A. Allard School of Law at the University of British Columbia and Lazaridis Hall at the University of Waterloo. Current academic projects include The New Vic at McGill

University and the Temerty Faculty of Medicine's new James and Louise Temerty Building at the University of Toronto. Diamond Schmitt has offices in Toronto, Vancouver and New York.

About Abbott Brown

Abbott Brown Architects was founded in 2013 by Jane Abbott and Alec Brown, who between them have over 45 years of industry experience. The office has earned a reputation for cultivating bold, responsive design solutions, particularly in public and historic contexts. Abbott Brown has, over its short history, won nine Nova Scotia Lieutenant Governor's Awards for Architecture, in addition to other local and national accolades. The thrust of their work is on developing and championing effective architectural design that balances the richness of extant culture and context with a modern approach to form, space and the user experience. Current projects include the Pool Pavilion on the Halifax Common, renovations to the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown as well as the Turret Arts Space (Khyber Building) in Halifax.

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