



Gift to The Future King's Campaign launches next design phase for the Southeast Corner Project

A \$1.1 million donation will fund the next design phase for a new building on the southeast corner of King's campus. The design, by Canadian architects Diamond Schmitt in association with Abbott Brown, envisions a place to foster future generations of journalists and creative writers and a campus that's more reflective of and welcoming to all communities.

For immediate release

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The University of King's College is moving into the schematic design phase of its groundbreaking redevelopment plan for the southeast corner of King's campus, thanks to a generous \$1.1 million donation to the Welcoming: The Future King's campaign from [King's Chancellor Debra Deane Little](#) and her husband Robert Little through their Alpha Aquilae Foundation.

The SEC Project's first phase was also funded by the Alpha Aquilae Foundation, culminating in the unveiling of concept designs for the SEC Project in November 2025. Diamond Schmitt's concept designs detailed a plan for a welcoming, light-filled building with new facilities for the School of Journalism, Writing & Publishing, a reconceived Athletic Centre, residences and gathering places for students and the broader community. The project is crucial to maintaining and enhancing the national leadership of King's in journalism and in writing and publishing education and to the contribution of King's to an informed citizenry and democracy.

"King's is extremely proud to launch the next phase of this bold, unique project that will invigorate our campus with state-of-the-art facilities and a stunning architectural design. The SEC Project will be a physical embodiment of King's dedication to the next generations of students, and of the creative economy and inclusive media that are critical to democracy in Canada," says President William Lahey. "We are profoundly grateful for the leadership and generosity shown by Chancellor Debra Deane Little and Bob Little, who not only share, but who are helping us realize our vision for the future of King's."

The Alpha Aquilae Foundation supports education, health, and community causes. This marks the sixth major gift from the foundation in seven years. It has been instrumental in many initiatives at King's, including the [restoration of three of King's five historic student residences](#) and, most recently, the launch of the [Student Academic Support Program](#).

"Bob and I are thrilled to encourage the development of this stunning venue that will enrich the educational experience of King's faculty, staff, students and athletes," says Chancellor Debra Deane Little. "This next phase of the SEC Project will bring the university one huge step closer to realizing its vision for a revitalized campus, welcoming all who wish to be part of this exceptional community."

SEC Phase 2: Schematic Design

This next step in the SEC design process involves generating schematics that closely examine the project's physical constraints and enable the design team to evaluate potential construction materials, building systems, and project delivery approaches. The design team will continue working closely with the King's community to confirm project requirements and test emerging design options.

"We are incredibly excited to continue our work on this transformational project for King's, shaped by ongoing engagement with the King's community and a respect for the legacy of the historic buildings on campus," says Martin Davidson, Principal at Diamond Schmitt. "This phase will bring further refinement to the core principles of the design, a project that positions a light-filled, wood-framed galleria both as a connector to Dalhousie and a shared living room for the campus, informed by Indigenous and African Nova Scotian histories."

The SEC Project will be designed not only to achieve LEED certification, but also to be a key step in the university's commitment to creating a "Net-Zero Energy Campus," with the goal of reaching net-zero GHGs for Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions before 2030. The SEC design prioritizes sustainable construction materials and incorporates a geothermal project to heat and cool the entire King's campus. The project is also pursuing Rick Hansen Gold Certification for accessibility.

Diamond Schmitt's SEC design will incorporate locally sourced materials and sustainable and advanced construction methods to help build the Canadian construction economy. To ensure Canadian-made elements are practical and financially viable, the SEC design team is engaging local manufacturers and sub-trades early in the process, translating design intent into meaningful economic impact.

Procurement and contracts will prioritize Canadian vendors. All structural steel used in the building will be Canadian, and the curved glass galleria will be fabricated using capabilities available in Canada. This project aims to be among the first major Atlantic Canadian public buildings to showcase heavy-timber construction, supporting the growth of a local, emerging heavy-timber manufacturing and construction industry, while also prioritizing the involvement of Mi'kmaq craftspeople and artists in the design and construction of interior wood elements.

The project seeks to incorporate reused bluestone from the existing Gymnasium and other sources in Atlantic Canada. Commonly called "Dalhousie stone," this material was used extensively in historic buildings at both Dalhousie and King's. In addition to reinforcing a shared architectural heritage between the two institutions, the use of stone such as bluestone and granite acknowledges a deep African Nova Scotian connection to the province's stone masonry tradition. The project will source local stone and seek to engage African Nova Scotian tradespeople in construction.

Partners from the Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities have played an integral role in informing institutional and design decisions, with key ideas for incorporating Indigeneity and African Nova Scotian history and culture within the physical spaces in the new building.

Phase two of the SEC Project began in March of this year and is scheduled to be complete in July 2026.

More information about the SEC Project

The Southeast Corner Project (SEC) will be where rich, inclusive and historically accurate national narratives are explored, crafted and shared across mediums, to foster a collective identity for a diverse population. The new 86,000-square-foot (8,000-square-metre) multi-use building will house the [School](#)

[of Journalism, Writing & Publishing](#) and include Canada's first [Centre for Excellence in Podcasting](#), an open newsroom, audio, video and media labs, computer labs, offices, an auditorium and a new home for the King's Co-op Bookstore. Also in the design is a modern, full-size gymnasium, as well as weight, cardio and physiotherapy rooms. The upper floors will feature affordable, accessible and flexible on-campus housing for up to 100 students. The building also features dedicated community gathering places.

- [Learn more about the SEC Project](#) (including an animated video of the design concepts)
- [Additional quotes from community members in support of the SEC Project](#)
- [Image gallery and photo captions](#)

About Welcoming: The Future King's Campaign

Culminating in June 2026, this \$15-million campaign seeks to open doors for aspiring students from all economic and cultural backgrounds, of all genders, races and abilities. Campaign funding priorities are to empower student success and access, expand and diversify the educational experience and enhance cultural life at King's. Through this work, and with the help of donors, King's academic learning and community will be strengthened and enriched in all its dimensions. [Welcoming: The Future King's](#)

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. ukings.ca

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 Sustainability Park 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. dsai.ca

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.

abbottbrown.ca

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