

ATHLETIC COMPLEX: A Loss ?

by Roger Metcalf

In the beginning God created Heaven, Earth, and the South End, so it would seem to even the most casual observer of the Dalhousie-Halifax City Physical Education Complex controversy.

Last July Dalhousie applied to the City for a building permit to construct a "Physical Education, Sports, and Recreational Complex" on property south of South Street. (Known as the "Stairs Property", the university had just recently been able to purchase the land when they were given first option to buy in the will of the previous owner). The City stalled in issuing the permit. Local residents and with City Council help, succeeded in rezoning the land downward. Thus, Dal then was in violation of the zoning regulation of the area - which meant, obviously, that Dal could no longer build the Complex on the property they had chosen for the site.

Dalhousie appealed the rezoning decision to the Planning Appeals Board and the Nova Scotia Supreme Court. The Nova Scotia Supreme Court ordered the City to issue a permit. The order maintained that the City could

not legally delay the issuance of a building permit, because "lot consolidation", (the technicality which originally delayed issuance) could not be considered a prerequisite to issuing the permit.

While the City contemplated whether or not to appeal the court's decision, the South End citizens who had originally fought the building of the complex in their area, made numerous public statements to the effect that they "had only begun to fight". Alderman Dennis Connolly (Ward 1) said that he felt the City could win an appeal. He maintained that lot consolidation has traditionally been a prerequisite to issuing a permit, and was a weapon that the City had used to get developers to conform to City requests for improvement in any development. Still another spokesman for the Concerned Dalhousie Area Residents (as the citizens liked to call themselves) said that they had more potent weapons with which to fight the university. However, he did not elaborate.

Several days later, the university was given another set-back to its plans. The Windsor Foundation, which was donating \$500,000 to the project, withdrew its offer. There had originally been a time limit set on how long the

Foundation would make the money available to Dalhousie. The time was allotted to the university to straighten out their legal hassles and raise the additional money necessary to build, but Dalhousie could not accomplish either task despite several extensions of the deadline. Consequently, the Foundation did withdraw their funding, the local daily newspaper, the "Mail Star", gave the story front-page coverage, with a not-too-polite kicker the story of "Hicks (Dalhousie university president Henry Hicks) unavailable". Later they ran another story, with Dr. Hicks' comments on the situation. Hicks said that the university and the Foundation had parted as friends, and that the university would reapply for the grant at a later date (presumably when the university could raise the additional funds). No word has been mentioned of the project in the paper since.

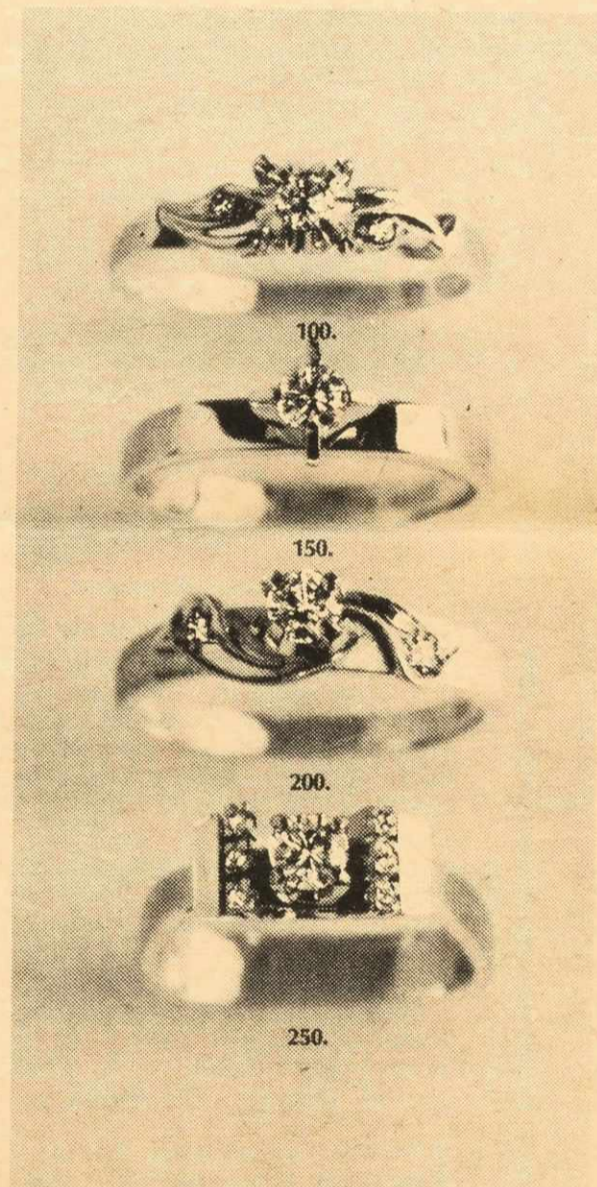
So now the Physical Education Complex controversy has been drawn into its second year of action-packed adventure, with seemingly no end in sight. The local citizens have added further fuel to the fire, claiming that Dalhousie "revised" plan for the Complex had an additional 25% floor space. They maintain that this is further proof that the

"plan" for the complex, when presented last year, was really no plan at all. This, to the residents was ample evidence to prove Dalhousie could not deal "in good faith" with the residents of the area in which the university resides. (However, few of the residents have risen to challenge Ralph Medjuck's plans for Quinpool Road, where equally dubious planning principles were used. Halifax, so it seems, still doesn't know the meaning of the words,

"double standards.")

The most interesting point to come from this exchange is that the university has not denied the reports of the increased floor space in its plan. This would tend to lend truth to the allegations of the residents.

As the situation now stands, Dalhousie is still trying valiantly to obtain its "Sports" complex. Perhaps students may only have to wait another ten years to have this dream realized.



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PLACE: ARTS & ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Undergraduate Students

9, 11 Sept.	9:00-7:00
10, 12, 13 Sept.	9:00-5:00
14 Sept.	9:00-NOON

Graduate Students

13	— 9:00-5:00
14	— 9:00 TO NOON