

## HRM – Central Library

### Historic Background

The site of the proposed Central Library in Halifax is ascribed high potential for encountering significant archaeological resources. Once part of a larger property known as ‘the Governor’s Farm’, the site may contain structural remains, features and other archaeological deposits, that range in age from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.

In 1800, the property was purchased by the Duke of Kent and the military constructed a new building that would serve as the Commandant’s house. According to some sources, this new structure was built on the same footprint as an earlier structure that was built sometime prior to 1784 (Piers 1947: 30). This new building, which became known as ‘Bellevue’, served as the home for every Commander-in-Chief of the army from 1801 – 1906 (*Plate 1*). In addition to the Commandant’s house itself, nineteenth century maps, particularly an 1851 Military Ordinance map and an 1878 fire insurance map, identify several structures and features on the property (*Figure 1*). These include stables, privies, guard houses and offices (Royal Surveyors 1851; Hopkins 1878).

Bellevue was gutted by fire in 1885 and reconstructed by 1887. During the reconstruction an addition was made to the front (Piers 1947: 30). During the early twentieth century, Bellevue was converted to an Officer’s quarters and offices. The portion of the property that contained Bellevue house was turned over to the City of Halifax as military surplus in 1948. That same year, the City sold the property to Maritime Telegraph and Telephone Company. The property was expropriated by the Nova Scotia Technical College in 1955 and Bellevue was torn down and the property turned into a parking lot.

The attached figures are approximate representations of where the structures identified on the 1878 map fall within the property on an air photo (*Figure 2*) and a site plan (*Figure 3*). It should be noted that the placement of the structures is **approximate**.



**PLATE 1: Bellevue House c.1870**

**References Cited:**

- Akins, Thomas B.  
2002 *History of Halifax City*. Brook House Press: Dartmouth. Originally published by the Nova Scotia Historical Society in 1895.
- Hopkins, H.W.  
1878 *City Atlas of Halifax, Nova Scotia*. Provincial Surveying & Publishing Company: Halifax.
- Piers, Harry  
1947 *The Evolution of the Halifax Fortress, 1749-1928*. Public Archives of Nova Scotia: Halifax.
- Royal Surveyors  
1851 *Plan of Bellevue, the Commandant's Headquarters on Spring Garden Road*. NSARM V6/240-1851 Halifax.

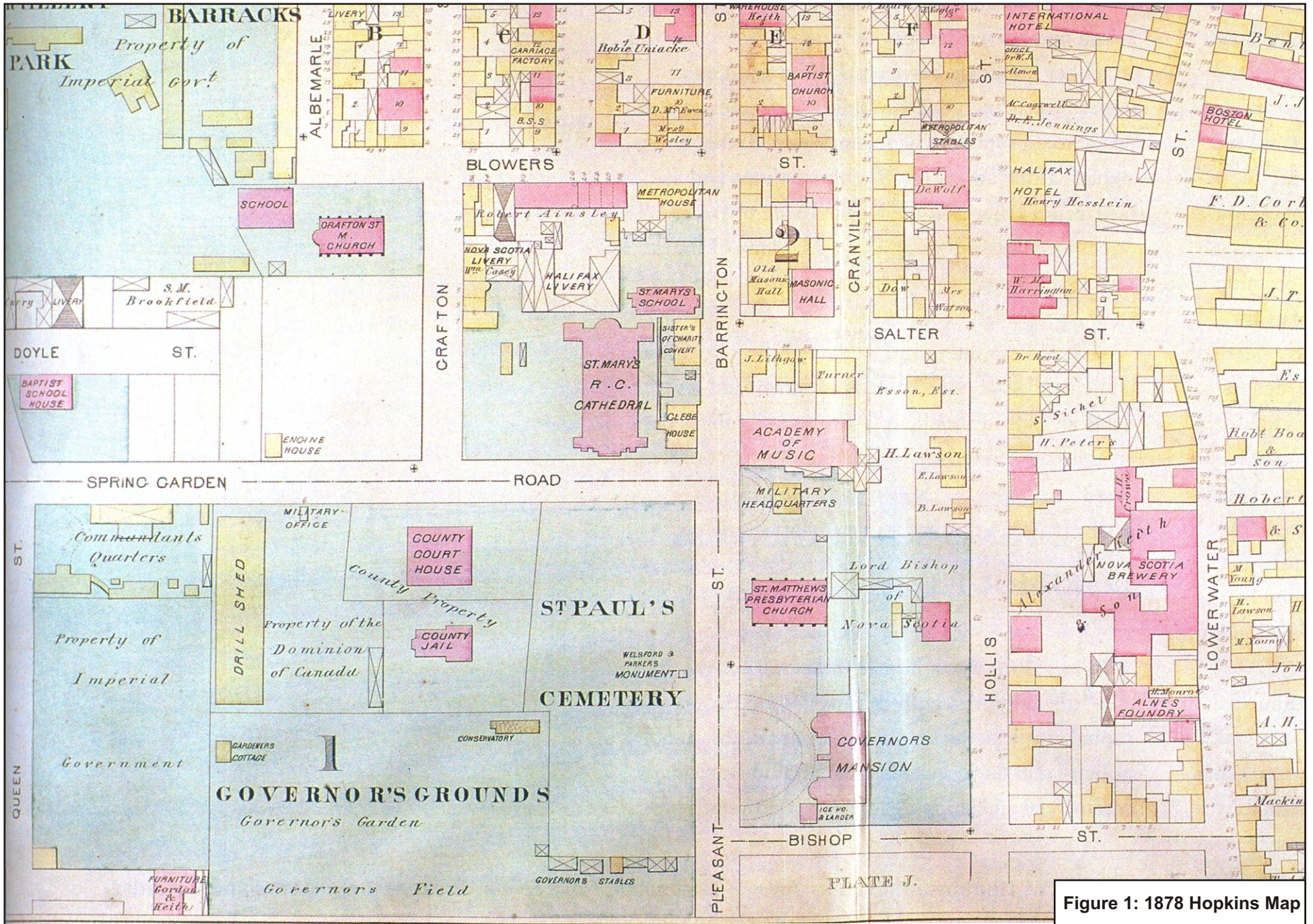
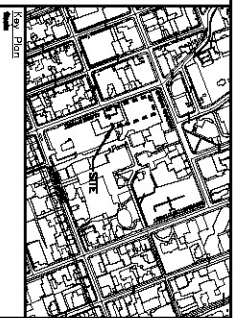
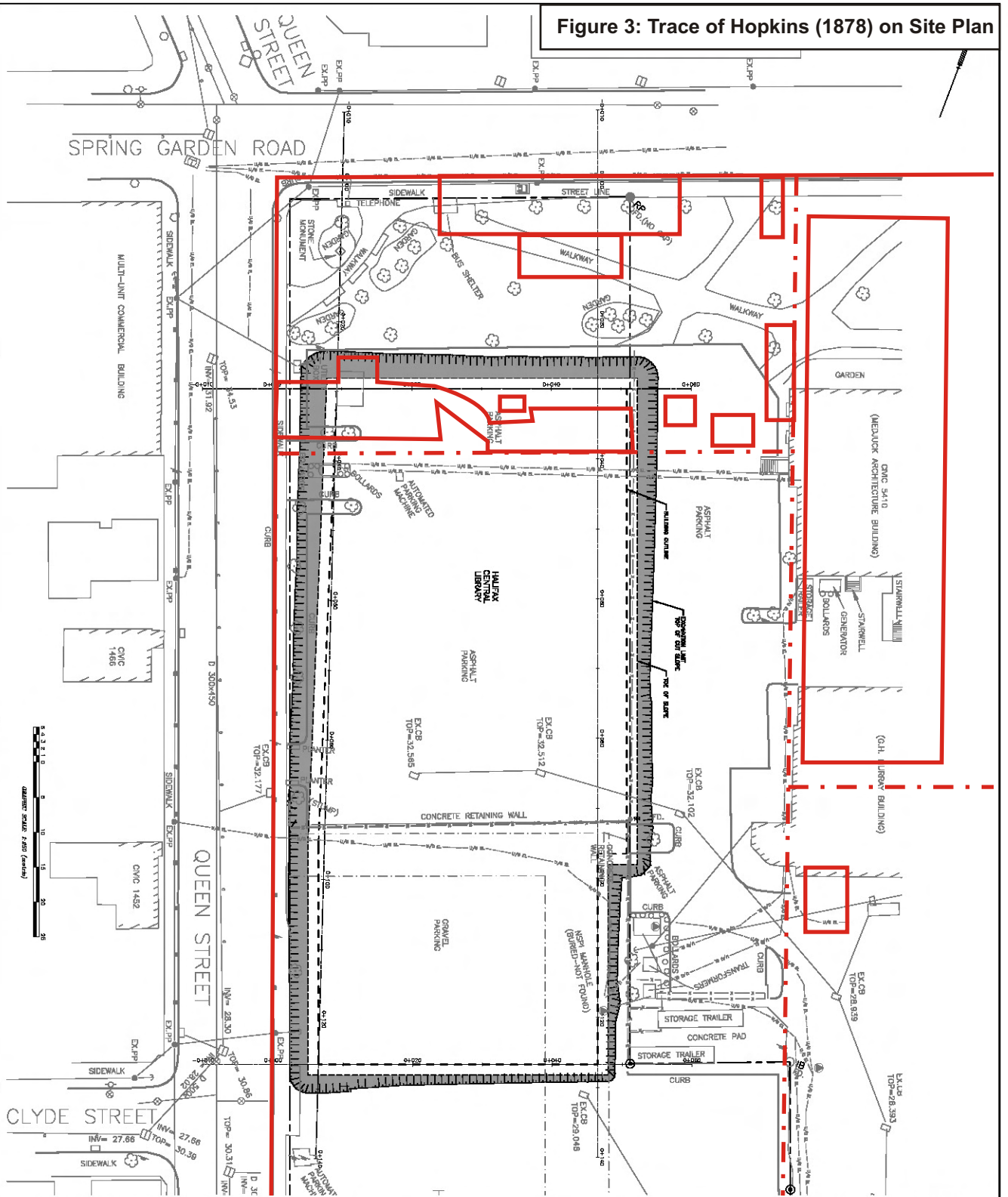


Figure 1: 1878 Hopkins Map



Figure 2: Trace of Hopkins (1878) on Air Photo

Figure 3: Trace of Hopkins (1878) on Site Plan



**NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION**

<p><b>DATE</b></p> <p><b>SCALE</b></p> <p><b>PROJECT NO.</b></p> <p><b>REVISIONS</b></p> <p><b>APPROVED</b></p> <p><b>SHEET</b></p>	<p><b>DATE</b></p> <p><b>SCALE</b></p> <p><b>PROJECT NO.</b></p> <p><b>REVISIONS</b></p> <p><b>APPROVED</b></p> <p><b>SHEET</b></p>	<p><b>DATE</b></p> <p><b>SCALE</b></p> <p><b>PROJECT NO.</b></p> <p><b>REVISIONS</b></p> <p><b>APPROVED</b></p> <p><b>SHEET</b></p>	<p><b>DATE</b></p> <p><b>SCALE</b></p> <p><b>PROJECT NO.</b></p> <p><b>REVISIONS</b></p> <p><b>APPROVED</b></p> <p><b>SHEET</b></p>
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