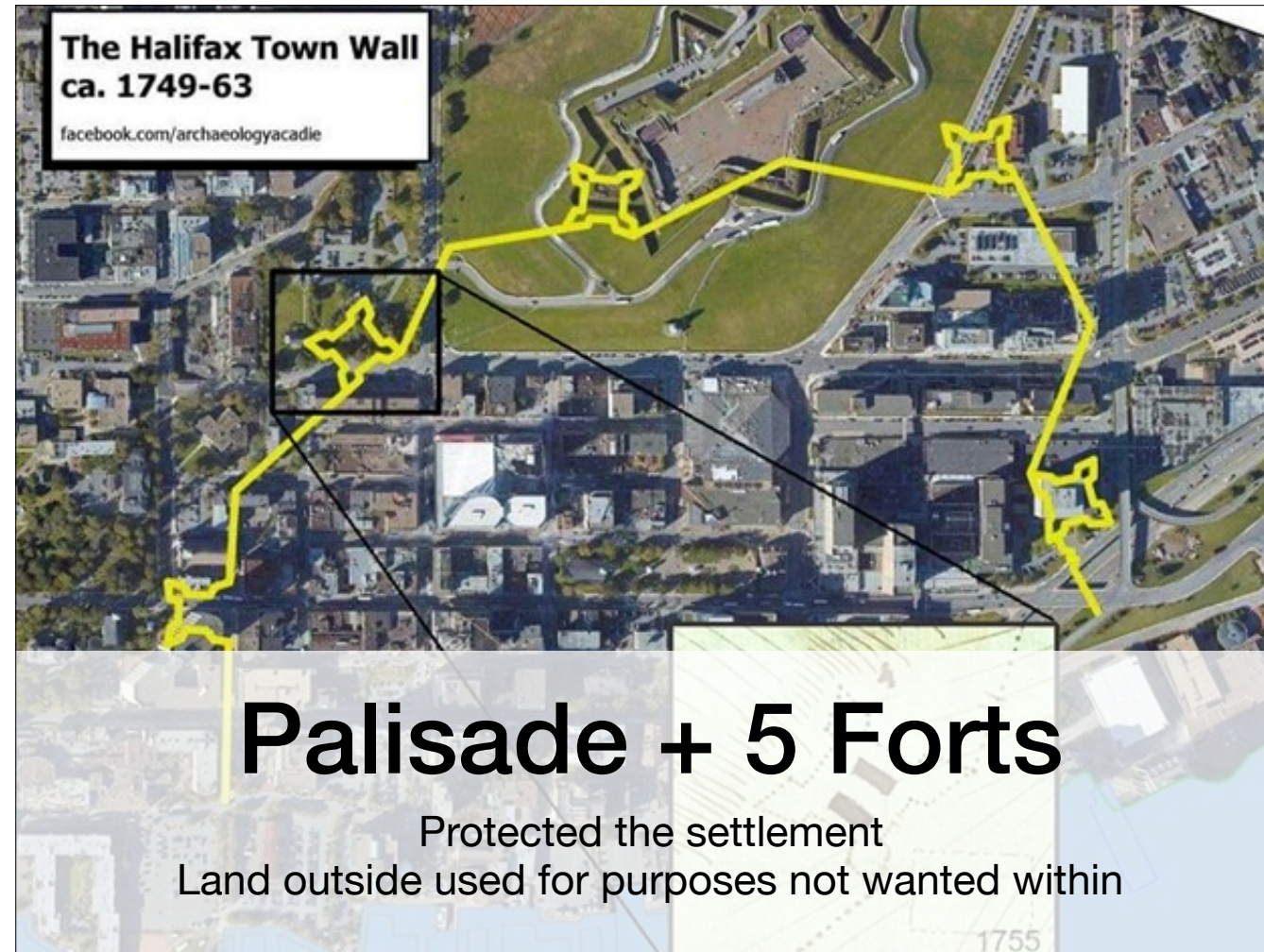




The Memorial Library

Don't judge a book by its cover



Palisade and five forts: Horseman, Cornwallis, George, Latrell, Grenadier were constructed in 1750 to protect the settlement from attacks by French, Acadian and indigenous militias and raiding parties.

Land outside the palisade within rifle and canon shot was used for purposes not wanted inside such as burying grounds, gallows, trash, and farming.

Main gates to the settlement were located near Fort Horseman

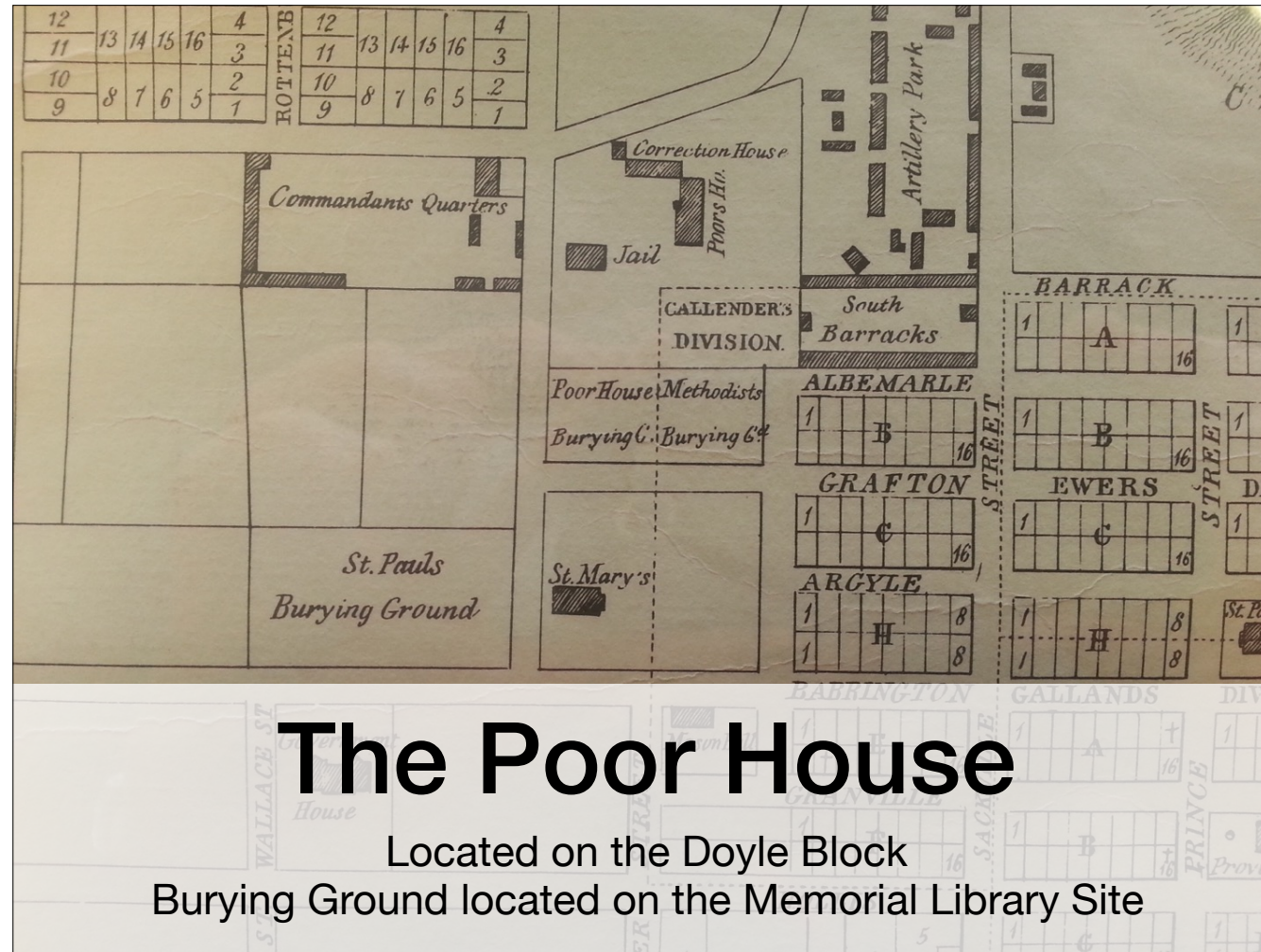
Halifax's Original Burying Ground

Memorial Library site
located between Fort
Horseman and Fort
Cornwallis, within rifle
and canon range



The Memorial Library site is located near where Fort Horseman once stood, near the gates to the settlement.

The Memorial library site was constituted as the poor house property in 1762.



The Poor House

Located on the Doyle Block

Burying Ground located on the Memorial Library Site

The Poor House was an independent institution funded by churches and donations from private citizens.

The Memorial Library site became a central part of a busy and dense complex of Halifax public works, military and institutional buildings.

The city grew around the poor house, burying grounds, churches, and Royal Artillery Park



Paupers Graveyard

Used for over 100 years
Originally walled, out of sight, layers of burials

Originally walled off and closed to general public. Walls were constructed by the inmates of the poor house. Poor house inmates (paupers) dug their own graves.

According to the Commissioners of the Poor report in 1834, graves in the burying ground were not dug sufficiently deep.

Tonnes of top soil were delivered in 1834 to establish new 5-foot-deep layers for new burials. The entrance to that part of Halifax was considered offensive. Fencing and walls were constructed, and reconstructed multiple times.

Minimum 4500 Haligonians interred

- Paupers constructed their own coffins
- Sold coffins to generate revenue
- Sold baked goods and sundries



Poor house dead were buried hastily. The paupers' grave was noted in multiple government reports that skulls and bones kept rising to the surface. The entire site was plagued by awful smell.

A lack of respect of the poor both in life and death.

Allan Marble's *Physicians, pestilence, and the poor* estimates minimum 4500 burials. 2840 officially and 1700 unofficially.

Bridewell Prison and Poorhouse Hospital Burials

- Inmates that died
- Executions
- Prison hospital deaths
- Poorhouse hospital
- Quarantine



Bridewell prison was located at the corner of Queen and Spring Garden where the Doyle stands today.

Bridewell prison was also used as an insane asylum in the 1760s. There was an average of 800 people at Bridewell with an average of 100 deaths per year. Outbreaks of disease in the prison were frequent and epidemics would wipe out large portions of the prison population.

The Halifax Necropolis

More than 20,000 buried:
The Old Burying Grounds, St. Mary's, Memorial Library, Methodist Cemetery

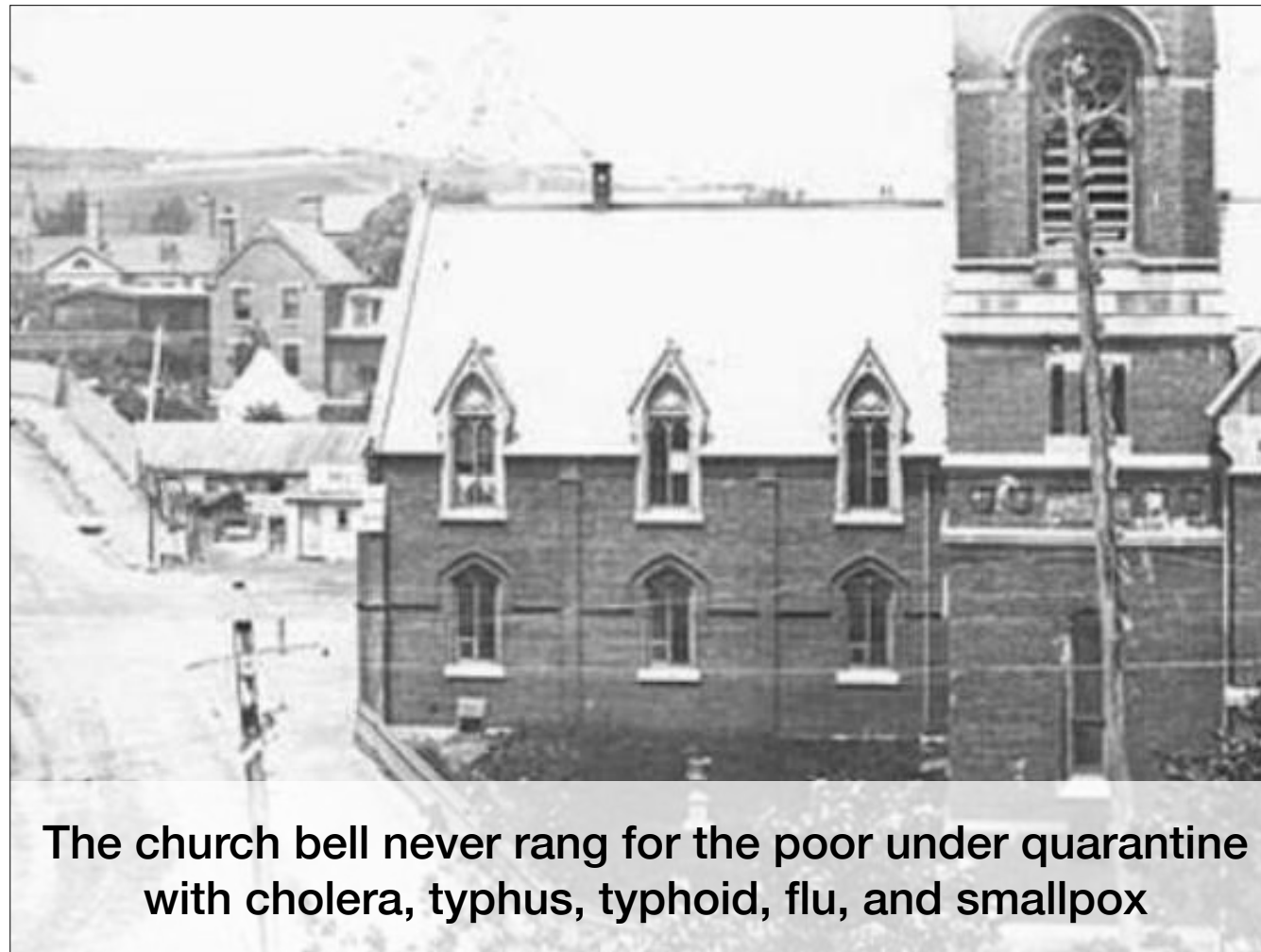


20,000 is very likely a low estimate.

The Memorial Library site contains at a minimum 4000 burials. Burials extend under the Grafton Street sidewalk. There are at least 3500 burials under the parking lot at St. Mary's, which was the first cemetery for Catholics inside Halifax. The width of Spring Garden road was increased in 1918 and burials are likely under the sidewalk and into the road itself. The Methodist cemetery is still intact today.

For the Grafton Park development at St. David's 221 bodies were disinterred from under the church hall (church records indicated 30) and relocated to the St. David's crypt at a cost of over \$1.2 million.

The Old Burying ground contains approximately 1100 headstones, yet contains at least 10,000 burials.



The church bell never rang for the poor under quarantine with cholera, typhus, typhoid, flu, and smallpox

Halifax was susceptible to epidemics due to lack of sanitation, and being a port city where ships brought foreign diseases ashore.

Halifax lacked for medical care. If you became terrible ill and couldn't afford long term care, you were likely to end up in the poor house hospital.

247 Poorhouse inmates died in 1827 from a smallpox epidemic



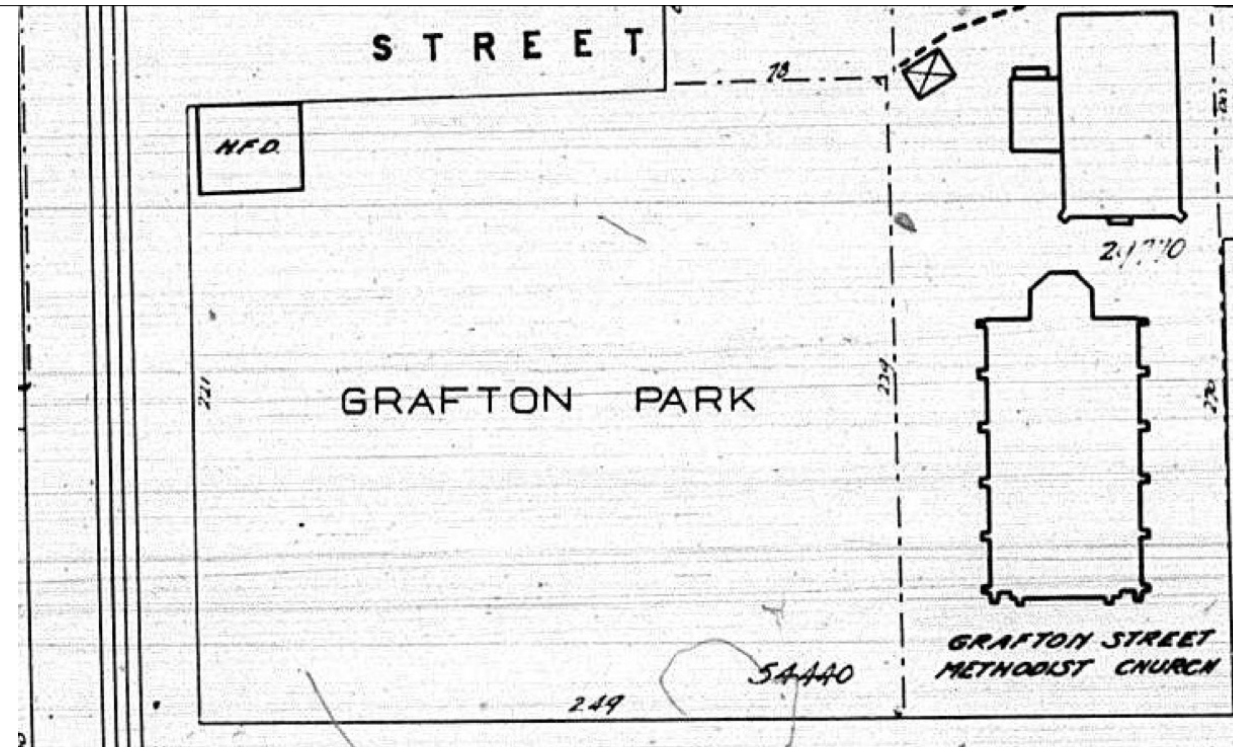
**Paupers
Inmates
African NS
Jewish
Soldiers
Indigenous
Patients
Sailors**

Hessian and British soldiers from the American War of Independence were buried in the paupers' grave, wrapped in shrouds and buried hastily.

Destitute peoples of all kinds, both military and civilian were buried in the paupers grave.

The poor house did not discriminate against ethnicities or religions. In a dark and twisted sense, Victorian classism was irrelevant inside the poor house and the paupers graves.

The pirates the the Barque Saladin are but one example of criminals executed and buried in the paupers grave. These pirates are said to be buried under the Spring Garden sidewalk.



Grafton Park

Public Land Grant of 1882

“To be used as public square and no other purpose.”

The provincial government determined the history of the site and its status as a mass grave meant it should only be used as a public park.

Multiple proposals in the 1830s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s were put before government to use this land for multiple purposes including but limited to: Fire stations, pasture lands, a courthouse, a high school, and cricket grounds.

In the 1880s, government decided the paupers grave site needed to be improved “into a respectable condition.”

The provincial government granted this land to the City of Halifax under condition it would “forever” be used as a public square.

Few people realize that under their feet in and all around this site, lay the disrespected and forgotten of Halifax.



Mayflower Fire Station No. 5

Located on the southwest corner of Grafton Park.
Only building permitted despite multiple petitions.

One of the primary fire stations for Halifax.

The station was eventually moved to the corner of Robie and University ave. The building became a bookstore (Connolly) before being demolished before the Memorial Library's construction.

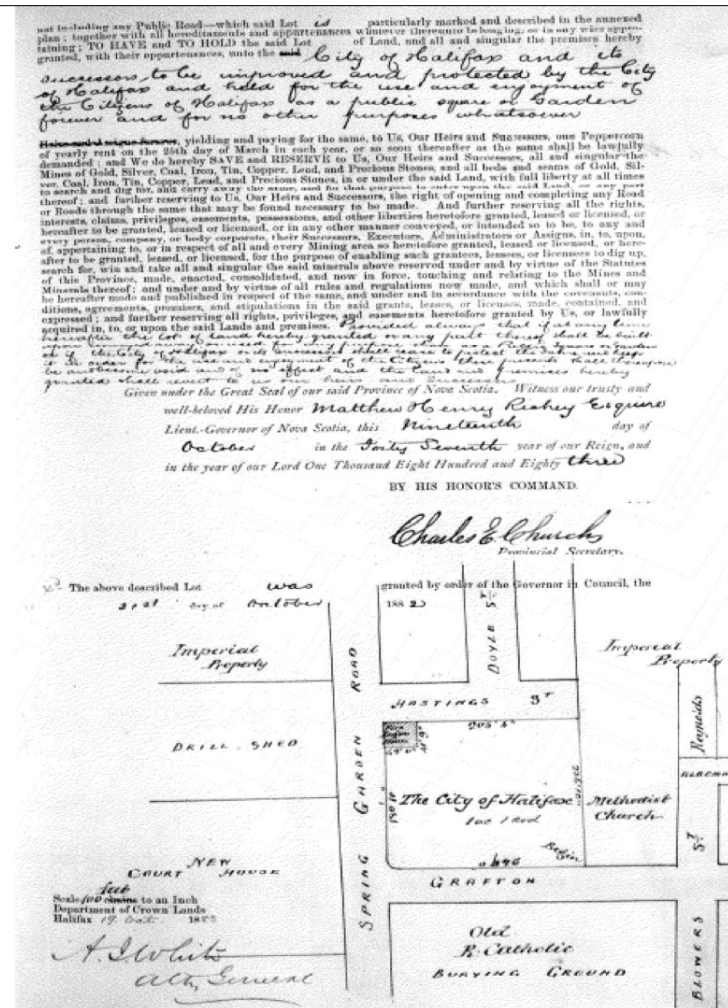


*Court House
Halifax, Nova Scotia, looking east 1860
R.B.*
Triumphal Arch of General Trollope

As Halifax grew, the paupers grave slowly faded from memory.

The Reversion Clause

- Protects the land from being developed
- Recognized the site as a mass grave
- Designated a park and public square



Hon. John S. Thompson (later Prime Minister, and founder of Dalhousie Law School), in a memo from May 22, 1882, contributed to the Reversion Clause. He stated that the land should never be sold or ever developed.

1949 — 1951

Construction begins in 1949
A War Memorial and Cenotaph, the library opens in 1951



The Memorial Library was the first public building in Halifax after WWII. It was constructed to serve as a war memorial and cenotaph. Until this time, Halifax had no central library. The philosophy behind the building:

“The lack of such a library in Halifax is felt by many to be a disgrace. Nothing could be more symbolic of the sacrifices of those we wish to honour than a library housing books which Adolf Hitler burnt. A well-designed library would be a lasting Memorial, and with the passage of the years would evermore fittingly hallow the memories of those who died that others might enjoy freedom of speech and freedom of study.”

—Petition to Mayor and Council, December 4, 1947



Despite the good intentions to create of a war memorial, cenotaph, and central library, the construction of the Memorial Library desecrated paupers' graves in order to build footings and a foundation.

"This building was erected in memory of those who gave their lives in defence of their country. For their faith - for their courage - for their sacrifice. We will remember them."



The Halifax Memorial Library was designed by Leslie R. Fairn and built by the Standard Construction Company Ltd. as a modern classical structure.

It is perhaps the last example of neoclassical Artdeco architecture in Halifax. It reflects a stoic sense of place.

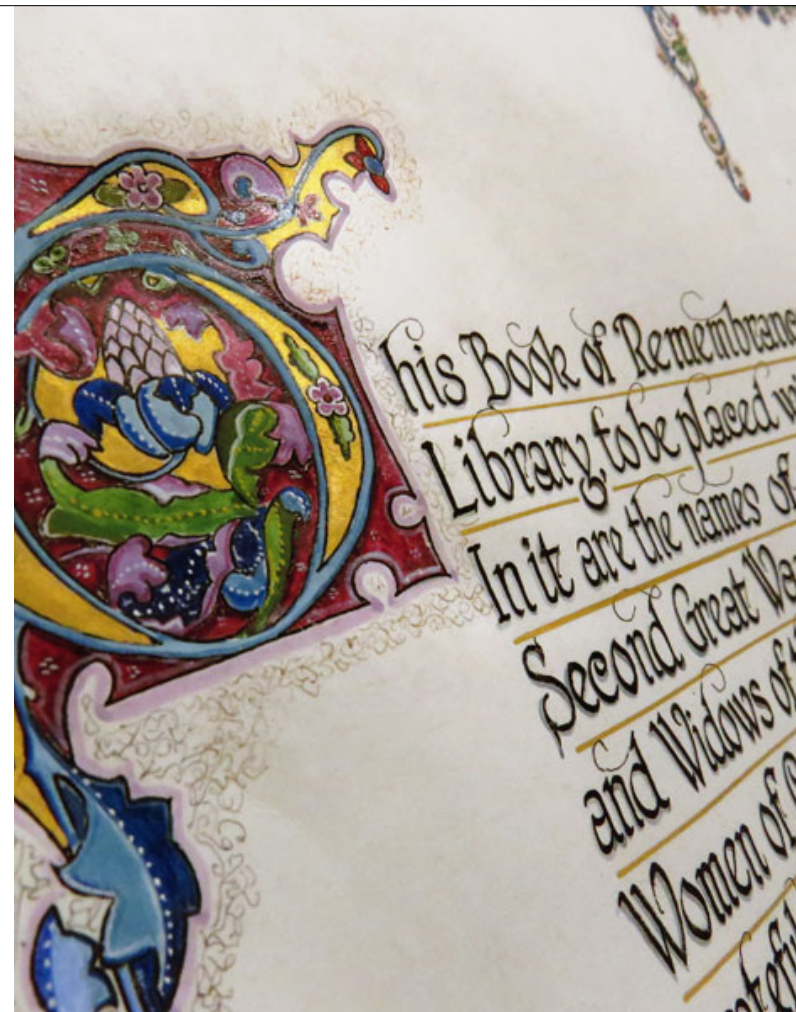
Over the main entrance, Halifax's coat of arms is carved into stone

Groups involved in outfitting the Memorial Library:

- Canadian Legion
- Silver Cross Women of Canada
- Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire
- Veterans Affairs

War Memorial Cenotaph

- Over 2200 Haligonians
- 2 Books of Remembrance, pages turned daily
- Flags
- Standards
- Corner stone
- Murals
- Plaque
- Silver Cross replica



The first book of remembrance contains the names of Haligonians who perished during WWI and their cause of death.

The second book lists the names of 677 men and women from Halifax who perished during WWII and the Korean War and was donated to the Library in 1955 by the Silver Cross Women of Canada.

Both books have been digitized by the Halifax Library system.

The book of remembrance has been moved to the new Central Library, but exists in the back of the library, out of sight, with pages no longer turned.

Murals were moved to the Maritime Command Museum



The plaque says it all. One of the few commemorative or official pieces of recognition of any person buried in the paupers grave.



As Halifax grew, the paupers grave slowly faded from memory.



Past. Present. Future.

What will happen to the Memorial Library Site?

Central to the history of Halifax and its founding.

The first burial ground.

A mass grave of poor people and victims of disease.

Thousands of Haligonians are interred there.

It truly belongs to the public.

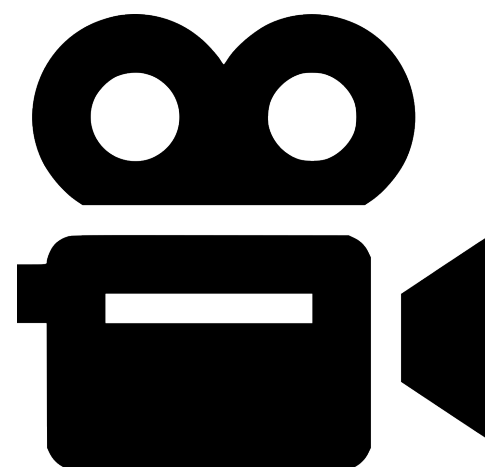
The Halifax War Memorial

A vision for the Halifax Memorial Library

Greg Urquhart

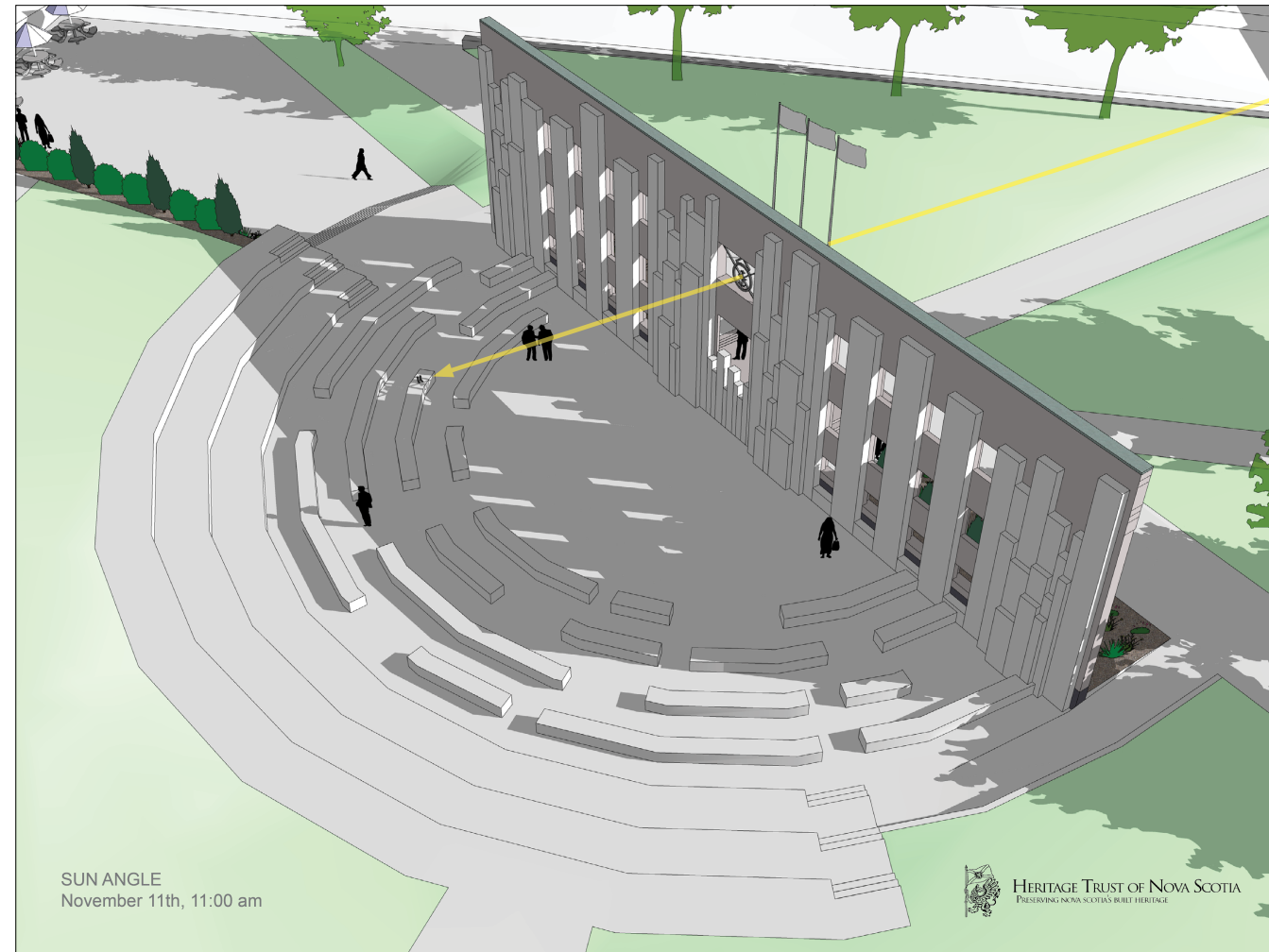


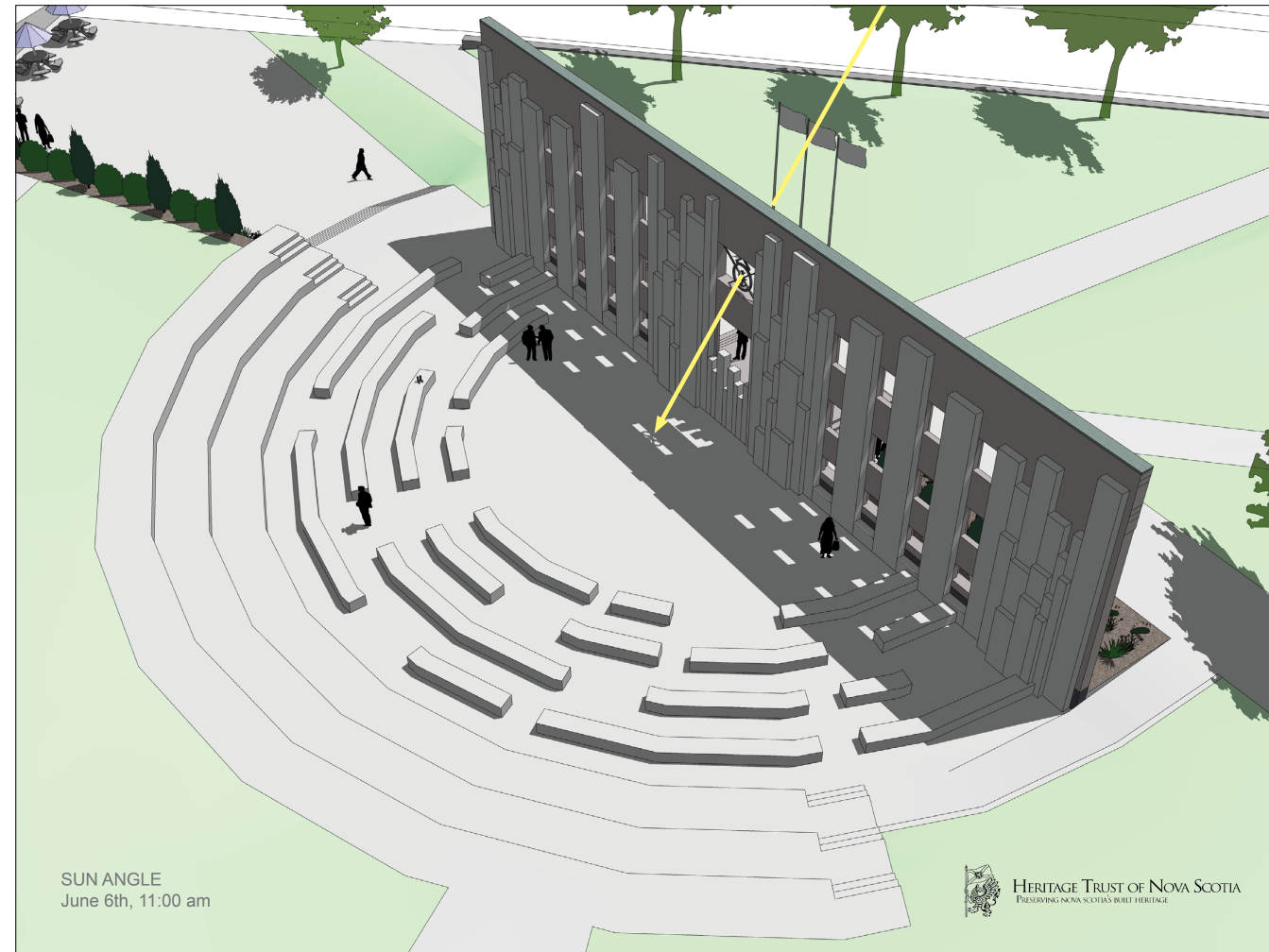
HERITAGE TRUST OF NOVA SCOTIA
PRESERVING NOVA SCOTIA'S BUILT HERITAGE

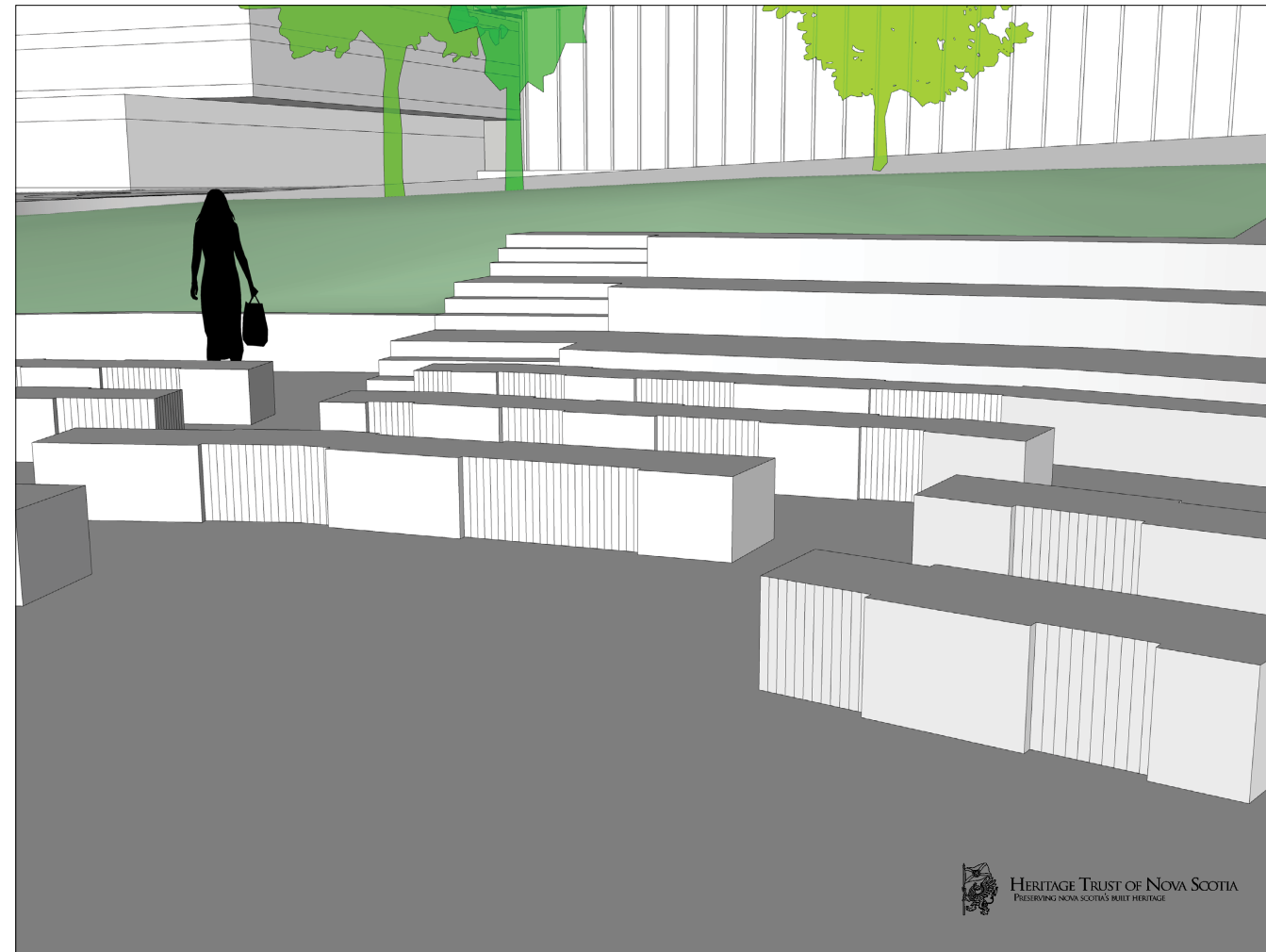


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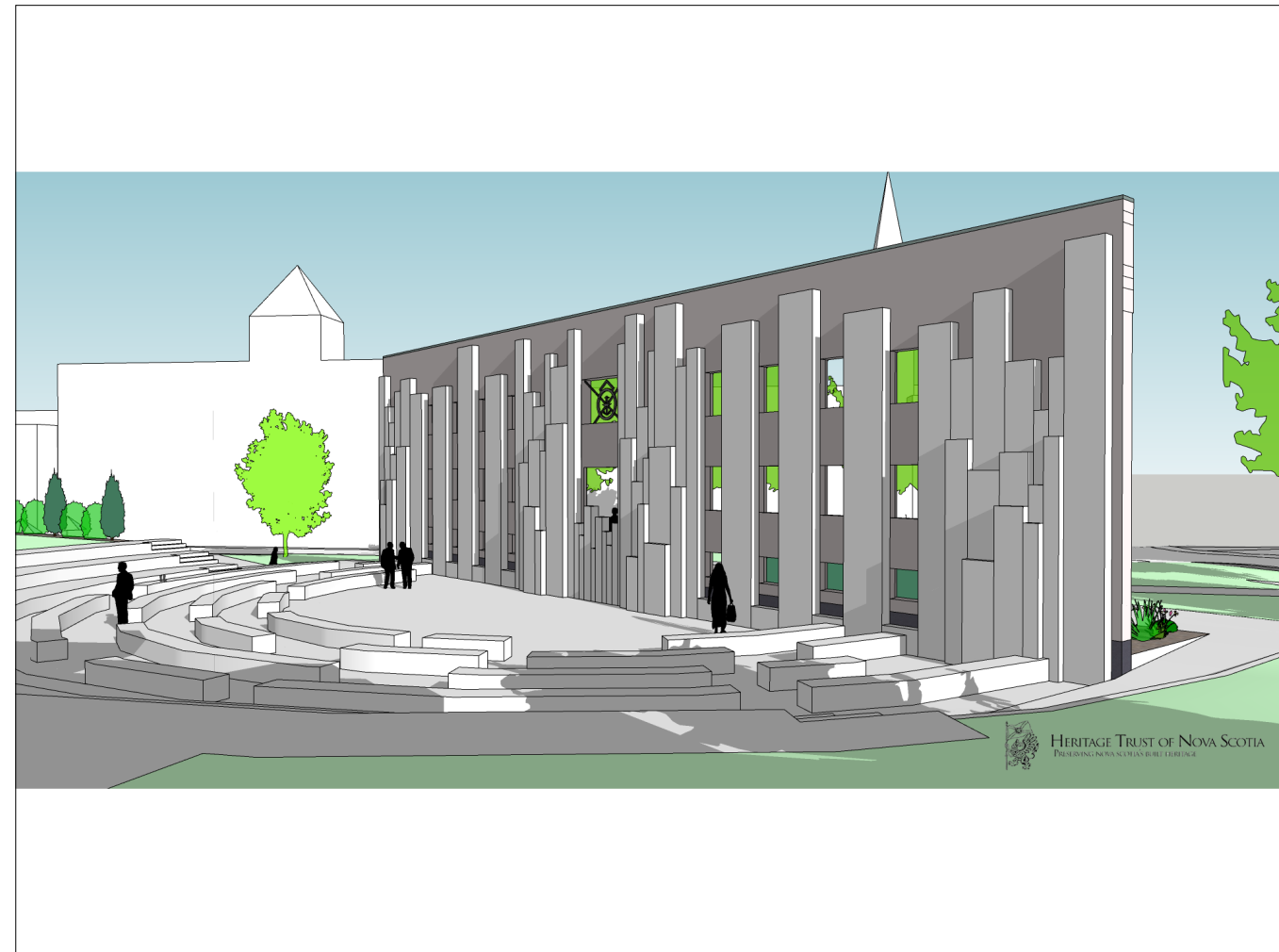














Keep the land public.

No further desecration.

Maintain a war memorial.

Recognize 4500+
Haligonians buried here.