



Heritage Advisory Panel Report For the Meeting of January 11, 2022

To: Heritage Advisory Panel **Date:** January 6, 2022
From: John O'Reilly, Senior Heritage Planner
Subject: **Heritage Alteration Permit Application No. 00249 for 700 Government Street**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Heritage Advisory Panel (HAPI) is requested to review a Heritage Alteration Permit Application for 700 Government Street and provide advice to Council.

Proposed is the removal of the remnants of the Captain Cook statue, consisting of a granite plinth and bronze plaque, from the Inner Harbour Causeway. Installed in 1976, the Captain Cook statue was a fibreglass copy of a British original and commemorated the 200th anniversary of the voyage that brought Cook to what is now British Columbia. On Canada Day, 2021, the statue was damaged and thrown into the inner harbour. Although the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (GVHA) salvaged a large piece of the statue, they do not believe the fibreglass sculpture can be repaired. In addition, the GVHA has consulted with local First Nations, and based on these consultations, does not wish to reinstate, or reproduce the sculpture.

The statue is not heritage-designated or listed as a protected heritage property on the City of Victoria Register of Heritage Properties. The 1994 designation report and updated 2004 statement of significance for the property do not identify the statue as a character-defining element or a contributor to the heritage value of the causeway. The *Official Community Plan, 2012* (OCP) and Downtown Core Area Plan (DCAP) heritage policies focus on the conservation of heritage property, and do not apply to other types of property or features of a heritage property that are not listed as character-defining elements. Although the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (the "Standards and Guidelines") anticipates situations where a later addition to a heritage property acquires heritage value over time, neither the 1994 report or 2004 statement of significance assigned any acquired value to the statue, despite its longstanding presence.

Staff are looking for commentary from the Heritage Advisory Panel with regard to:

- Appropriateness of removing the statue and plinth from the causeway

Under a 2006 legal agreement, the City has an option to buy back the statue or any number of listed objects if they are no longer required by the GVHA.

The Options section of this report provides guidance on possible recommendations the Panel may make, or use as a basis to modify, in providing advice on this application.

Description of Proposal

Proposed is the removal of a granite plinth and bronze plaque from the Inner Harbour Causeway.

The proposal includes the following major design components:

- Removal of the granite plinth and bronze plaque from the Inner Harbour Causeway and repairs to the area to match the existing sidewalk material and pattern.

Description of Historic Place

The 1994 statement of significance for the inner harbour causeway describes its significance as follows:

“The Causeway wall was constructed in 1903 to allow the filling in of the mud flats which existed to the east in James Bay. It replaced a wooden James Bay bridge which was in a state of disrepair. The causeway as designed by City Engineer C .E . Topp and constructed at a cost of \$ 150,000 following approval of a referendum on the " James Bay Flats Reclamation Bylaw" of 1901. This, in turn, led to the negotiations with the CPR in which the City offered the company concessions for this land in return for the construction of the Empress Hotel. Designed by Frances Rattenbury and completed in 1908, the hotel established Victoria as a primary tourist destination on the west coast of Canada.

The lower causeway was added in 1974. The lighting bollards were designed by the noted Canadian architect, Arthur Erikson. The chain and bollard design follows the original bollard design used in front of the Legislative Buildings at the turn of the century. The causeway wall was a prominent feature in an early sketch of the Inner Harbour by Frances Rattenbury showing an early view of the Empress Hotel, Post Office and Legislative Buildings.”

The 2004 statement of significance is attached to this report. It elaborates on the significance of the 1974 Lower Causeway and lists character-defining elements, but does not include the statue. Neither the 1994 report or 2004 statement of significance cite the statue.

The Captain Cook statue was installed on the causeway in 1976 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the voyage that brought Captain Cook to the coast of Vancouver Island near Nootka Sound. The statue cost \$9,000 and was constructed of “polybronze” fiberglass material. Mayor Peter Pollen commissioned the statue and funded it through an organization called the Victoria Regional Environmental Enhancement Foundation. The statue was a copy of a bronze original that stands at Cook’s home port of Whitby, England. The original statue was designed and constructed in 1912 by Scottish Sculptor John Tweed.

Consistency with Policies and Design Guidelines

Official Community Plan

The proposal is consistent with the policies of the *Official Community Plan* (OCP, 2012), which promotes the conservation of heritage property for current and future generations. The statue is not listed as a heritage property on the City of Victoria Register of Heritage Properties or

identified as a character-defining element. Its removal would therefore not impact the heritage value or character of the causeway.

Downtown Core Area Plan

The proposal is consistent with the heritage objectives of the DCAP, which encourages owners to retain, protect and improve real property with heritage character as a benefit to the public.

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

According to the Standards and Guidelines, heritage value is defined as follows:

“the aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual importance or significance for past, present and future generations. The heritage value of an historic place is embodied in its character-defining materials, forms, location, spatial configurations, uses and cultural associations or meanings.”

Heritage value is protected or enhanced through the preservation, rehabilitation or restoration of a property’s character-defining elements, as defined in a statement of significance. In this case, the statue was not identified as an aspect of the property’s heritage value or a character-defining element in the 1994 report about the causeway designation or the 2004 updated statement of significance. Removal of the statue has a net neutral impact on the property’s heritage value.

Regulatory Considerations

The City will request that the GVHA reinstate the surface underneath the statue plinth so that it matches its surroundings.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

The following section identifies and provides a brief analysis of the areas where the Panel is requested to provide commentary. The Panel’s commentary on any other aspects of the proposal is also welcome.

Appropriateness of the Heritage Alteration

The Captain Cook statue had no formal heritage status and is not listed as a contributor to the causeway’s heritage value. It is not listed as a character-defining element in the statement of significance. In light of these factors, the panel is asked to confirm the appropriateness of removal.

OPTIONS

The following are three potential options that the Panel may consider using or modifying in formulating a recommendation to Council:

Option One

That the Heritage Advisory Panel recommend to Council that Heritage Alteration Permit Application No. 00249 for 700 Government Street be approved as presented.

Option Two

That the Heritage Advisory Panel recommend to Council that Heritage Alteration Permit Application No. 00249 for 700 Government Street be approved with the following changes:

- as listed by the Panel.

Option Three

That the Heritage Advisory Panel recommend to Council that Heritage Alteration Permit Application No. 00249 for 700 Government Street does not sufficiently meet the applicable design guidelines and polices and should be declined (and that the key areas that should be revised include):

- as listed by the Panel, if there is further advice they would like to provide on how the Application could be improved.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - Subject Map
- Attachment B - Aerial Map
- Attachment C - Applicant's letter dated December 10, 2021
- Attachment D - Staff Report- November 25, 2004
- Attachment E - Staff Report- August 26, 1994
- Attachment F - Statement of Significance
- Attachment G - Daily Colonist Articles- July 13, 1976 and December 10, 1975

cc: Mark Crisp, Greater Victoria Harbour Authority