

**CITY OF VICTORIA  
HERITAGE ADVISORY PANEL  
MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 8, 2020**

**Present:** Pamela Madoff, Chair  
Steve Barber  
Avery Bonner  
Doug Campbell  
Kirby Delaney  
Helen Edwards  
Jim Kerr  
Shari Khadem  
Graham Walker

**Regrets:** Aaron Usatch

**Staff:** John O'Reilly, Senior Heritage Planner  
Malcolm MacLean, Community Planner  
David Luzzi, Transportation Design Technologist  
Katie Lauriston, Administrative Assistant

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The Chair called the meeting to order at noon.

1. **Adoption of the Minutes of the November 10, 2020 Meeting**

**Moved** by Doug Campbell

**Seconded** by Helen Edwards

**Carried (unanimous)**

2. **Announcements**

John O'Reilly:

- Bank Street School: Staff have received the consultant's report and the item is expected to be considered by Council in January 2021.

3. **2564 Graham Street - Heritage Designation Application No. 000191**

Presenter: John O'Reilly

Panel Questions and Comments

- Are the current paint colours original to the building? John O'Reilly: We are not sure.  
Pamela Madoff: With heritage designation there would be some regulation and control over colour selection.

**Moved** by Avery Bonner

**Seconded** by Kirby Delaney

That the Heritage Advisory Panel recommend that Council approve the designation of the property located at 2564 Graham Street.

**Carried (unanimous)**

*Graham Walker joined the meeting at 12:12 pm.*

4. **117 Wildwood Avenue - Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit No. 00158**

*This agenda item did not require minutes.*

5. **Wharf Street Retaining Wall Rehabilitation**

Presenters: David Luzzi, Transportation Design Technologist  
John O'Reilly, Senior Heritage Planner

- There are safety concerns due to loose and falling rocks from the wall.
- This is not a City-operated parking lot.
- Consultant has inspected the wall in its entirety and has made recommendations for repair based on the different types of construction used in each of the four sections of the wall.
- Repairs are planned for 2021.
- There are not many existing plans for the wall so a lot of information was gained by site inspection.

Panel Questions and Comments

- Doug Campbell: Recommendations are mostly about the surface of the wall. Was a structural analysis conducted as well? There seems to be a lot of weight being held back by the wall. David Luzzi: The consultant conducted a static analysis of the wall. One drawing of the wall shows the construction of the wall, but was limited in its detail. At this stage there are no plans to conduct a structural analysis.
- Doug Campbell: What is a static analysis? David Luzzi: It is an analysis of the existing heights and thicknesses of the wall, with some assumptions about the type of construction and soil behind the wall. It is a safety analysis about the likelihood of the wall overturning or failing. Doug Campbell: Every project that the Panel reviews has a structural upgrade required due to evolving building codes. In the case of an earthquake, the wall would be under considerable pressure and would be tested severely so it would be beneficial to see this information.
- Steve Barber: Commend staff for the thoroughness of the research and background on the wall.
- Jim Kerr: It appears that the area behind the wall was used for access. Is it used to access other buildings or is it discontinuous? John O'Reilly: It is partly blocked off and filled with rubble. It is not a clear or open space connecting other spaces. The report only covers the space accessing the former Hudson's Bay Company Warehouse.
- Jim Kerr: Have there been any issues with moisture accumulation behind the wall or adjacent subgrade portions under Wharf Street? The visible surface would be repaired, but are there issues with subsurface drainage from the other side? David Luzzi: The space beneath the sidewalk was only in place in section 1 of the wall. There is no means to access portions towards the south. The consultant's report notes that beneath the sidewalk it is very dry and in very good condition. The report does not note any expectation of infiltration behind the wall; however, in the static analysis, the consultant includes the potential for groundwater in that space.
- Avery Bonner: Is the majority of the weight being held on section 1 of the retaining wall? David Luzzi: The bulk of the weight of Wharf Street is being held by the wall to

the east. Avery Bonner: What is the grade of the wall to the east? Does it go all the way along, similar to the exterior? David Luzzi: The consultant concluded that this wall goes the entire length of the lot.

- Avery Bonner: Will any of the outside repair work change the colours or aesthetic of the existing wall? David Luzzi: No, the repairs will match the existing brick or stone material.
- Avery Bonner: Is there any information available to the public about the history of this wall? Pamela Madoff: This information would be great for media enquiries, the public and for visitors to the city.
- Ken Johnson (guest): Ken's former engineering firm did consulting work regarding the wall, which was under the care of the Provincial Capital Commission at the time.
  - There may have been a passageway through at one time.
  - The Provincial Capital Commission were asked if they wanted a core drill done to discern the width and strength of the wall, but it was not done.
- Pamela Madoff: Interpretive signage for the public that shows what buildings existed on the site is warranted. There is a great story to tell about this infrastructure project.
- David Luzzi: The City has been in contact with the Province on the proposed work and potentially they may cost-share on some of the work.

## 6. **579-585 Johnson Street Concept Plans**

Presenters: Gerald Hartwig, Property Owner/Proponent  
Tom Moore, Studio 531 Architects

- John delivered an introduction stating that he was looking for feedback from the Panel on the feasibility and reasonableness of expecting the applicant to restore 585-587 Johnson Street. He described the means by which the property was added to the Heritage Register and uncertainties around its condition and the viability of restoration.
- Tom Moore delivered a presentation on the conceptual plans, explaining the priority is to seismically upgrade the W.G. Cameron Building and leave it intact while adding density to 585-587 Johnson Street.
- The goal is to consolidate both sites, with appropriate response to context, and to provide rental residential housing.
- Rezoning is not proposed; will be working within the current zone setbacks and FSR.
- This is an informal discussion to get the Panel's early feedback.

*Graham Walker left the meeting at 1:05 pm.*

### Panel Questions and Comments

- Pamela Madoff: Asked John for clarification about the size of addition that would be allowed on the W.G. Cameron Building. John O'Reilly: A one-storey addition with a 4m setback is what the *Old Town Design Guidelines* recommends. Staff would expect all four elevations to be conserved.
- Jim Kerr: Is there a design guideline for this block regarding front façade and street wall height? John O'Reilly: The design guidelines describes the saw tooth pattern of building heights as a character-defining element of Old Town. Lower Johnson Street is cohesive; however, the *Old Town Design Guidelines* support three-storey transitions in scale. For example, if there is a two-storey heritage building, a new building next to it could be five storeys in height. If 585-587 Johnson Street were

restored, that would impact the massing. The City is technically dealing with two heritage buildings, although 585-587 Johnson Street may not have been added to the Heritage Register if it were to be considered today.

- Jim Kerr: Which of the options are more livable for the residential units? Tom Moore: This project emulates the Monda project with exterior walkways and front to back lighting for units. One of the big challenges is access to light. Looking at what Oliver Lang did with the Monda was an “aha” moment. There is a challenge with windows and access to light. When we started to look at an exterior walkway, the livability improved. In our opinion, these units will be very livable.
- Shari Khadem: Will the project have a full-height second storey? The section shows shorter height floors. Tom Moore: In order to get residential working on a 3m floor-to-floor, we create a courtyard in between the third storey and the restored front façade. Floor-to-floor for efficiency’s sake is a 4m floor-to-floor for the retail and a 3m for the residential. If we use timber, we might achieve 9 foot ceilings out of the 3m floors or we may achieve 8.5 foot ceilings if we use more conventional construction.
- Tom Moore: The units have also been designed to be delivered as a module, to be less invasive and ease construction. This would be a module with finished units.
- Shari Khadem: Are there any closer street views to show what the back of the building looks like from Pandora Avenue? John O’Reilly: No, there are only views from a distance. Tom Moore: As the application moves forward, we will do further views of the project and the back of the W.G. Cameron Building. We do not have those views yet, only bird’s eye views and further off views.
- Shari Khadem: There is more emphasis on the alley. Is there anything in the Statement of Significance (SOS) about the courtyard? John O’Reilly: In the SOS, one of the character-defining elements is its location on the alley and the contribution of the brick walls to the Klondike-era courtyard. The Klondike courtyard is also a contributor to the heritage value of the property. It is not currently publicly accessible so that is a benefit of this project.
- Steve Barber: I have some concerns with this application. During the history of the heritage program, there was conversion of a lot of courtyards into pedestrian areas starting with Bastion Square, which won an award, later with Market Square that turned a parking lot into pedestrian areas and public spaces. That was extended in the 1980s by Michael Williams at 555 and 563 Johnson Street with extended pedestrian walkways through the ground floors. A planning report was published about the 500-block suggesting this kind of pedestrian network could be extended north and linked. This never took place, but if you look at the Downtown Heritage Registry publication, it clearly identifies the Klondike courtyards as being of primary historic significance. It is unfortunate that we are seeing what could have been part of the pedestrian network being turned into a development site. That said, the City is in no position to tell an owner that they cannot develop in that area. Initially, I was opposed, but after listening to the design approach from Tom and his experience with Dragon Alley, if the development must take place, this is a pretty reasonable approach given that there is an attempt to preserve the sidewalls of the W.G. Cameron Building. It is unfortunate that the warehouse at the rear of the one-storey building would be lost. It is tragic that we are losing an opportunity to extend the pedestrian courtyards, but given the realities of what may take place, this is a reasonable approach.

- Pamela Madoff: Asked Steve if he had any thoughts on the restoration. Steve Barber: I do not oppose the demolition of 585-587 Johnson as it is too far gone. However, some buildings on the B-list can be rehabilitated. The Vogue was. I was around when the B-list properties were included on the Heritage Register. There was no other mechanism for enabling administrative processes to take place on the properties. A number of those properties have been rehabilitated. Pamela Madoff: Agreed with Steve. It would be useful to go through the list and find which have been rehabilitated rather than suggest that none should be.
- Doug Campbell: Good to see a project at this early stage. Adding new population to Old Town is good. It will add to the liveliness of the street. The idea of building around a courtyard is a good idea.
- Doug Campbell: As to the massing, there are two options, one being five storeys. I understand the sawtooth concept being permitted. However, if a new building is built, we would not want it being the high point, especially on Johnson Street. We would not want it to be the dominant form. We would want the old buildings to be. The building face on Johnson Street should be no higher than buildings on either side. Stepping back would be fine. The taller portions would be less visible and cast less of a shadow.
- Shari Khadem: In my opinion, I hope they focus on option A and not B. B is too much height on the street.
- Jim Kerr: There is an opportunity to do a very good interpretation of a street wall building. Look forward to the next set of plans. If the original building did not have its second floor removed, there would be a greater case for restoring the two-storey height. A single storey is not realistic. I agree that the new building should not be dominant on this block. There is room to do something between two and three storeys.
- Pamela Madoff: I think the project has tremendous potential if it builds on existing strengths, it will be something to be proud of. I want to go back to Tom's comment about "pushing the jelly." What is the expectation of how much height or density the site can take? Part of the thesis that was brought forward is that the seismic upgrade of the W.G. Cameron Building is the public benefit and that the density is then shifted elsewhere on the site. I think the notion that there is a lot of density to be achieved by consolidating the site and moving it around is not correct and not good site planning. The warehouse behind 585 Johnson Street is extraordinary, and it is too bad to be losing it. It gives you a sense of what Old Town is about. Although there is a policy in Old Town that suggests a 3:1 density, most heritage buildings do not even meet 2:1. It has to be considered in a contextual way whether 3:1 makes sense in terms of what it delivers.
- Pamela Madoff: There is value in the alley and courtyard, as the sides of the building will be visible. There is some private and public benefit to these accesses.
- Pamela Madoff: Thinking about Dragon Alley, I would be expecting the same kind of experience in the Klondike courtyard. I am imagining the pedestrian experience in the Klondike courtyard, especially since it is a southern exposure. That is something that needs to be understood, especially if there is a private and public benefit. It is really important that it be an inviting space.
- Pamela Madoff: In terms of the building on Johnson Street, I concur with Steve. There have been B-list buildings resurrected, but not ones where so much has been removed. I do not support replication. I am concerned about what a contextually

sensitive new building would look like on the site. A lot of it is about height and architectural detailing on a street like Johnson, which is so intact. It is a great opportunity, but also an enormous responsibility. How can it hold its own, but not be a jarring element? That will be a major consideration.

- Pamela Madoff: Regarding the height, new buildings should be somewhat deferential. This is a key location, but I feel as a foundational principle that we should respect the height allowance for new buildings, which is 15m. This is to encourage new development, but functions as a midpoint between the highest buildings and the lowest. I would be looking for a project that responds to that.
- Pamela Madoff: Always difficult not to think about use, but it is not a primary consideration. Rental is welcome, but this would be market rental. So the units might only be affordable if they are small. If you look at the history of Old Town, you will see hundreds of units added through rehabilitation of Old Town. That test has already been passed and so I do not see a need to move beyond what has already been delivered.
- Pamela Madoff: Hoping all comments will be foundational considerations.
- Pamela Madoff: One other consideration - a replacement building with upper storeys set back. That is a new form. I am not sure that would be a welcome approach rather than a new building that simply meets the appropriate height for that area because it is a sawtooth.
- Gerald Hartwig: Asked Tom to summarize what he has heard so that everyone is on the same page? Tom Moore: I'm not going to make a full list, but what I heard was that it had better be a great looking project. We have heard your comments. I appreciate discussions with John and Miko (Betanzo). This does inform us and gives us a good sense of what would be successful. We heard different things from different people so it is difficult to make a definite list. We are just looking at feasibility at this point, but if we do move forward "God will be in the details."
- Pamela Madoff: Thanked the owner and architect for meeting with the Panel in a collaborative way.

## 7. **Missing Middle Housing Initiative**

Presenter: Malcolm MacLean, Community Planner

- Early engagement on Missing Middle Housing Initiative

### Panel Questions and Comments

- Pamela Madoff: Need to recognize threats to and opportunities for heritage buildings that have benefited from the conversion bylaw. The potential impact on apartment buildings needs to be considered as well.
- Steve Barber: These are laudable goals, but one could see wholesale demolition in existing neighbourhoods. Very little of the existing built form is heritage designated or protected housing stock. Concerned about the impact of these policies on the existing fabric of the neighbourhoods. It is a challenge to create Heritage Conservation Areas in residential areas due to concerns about property values.
- Helen Edwards: Huge concerns over the existing policies and this could be even worse. Calling new projects heritage conversions is not beneficial or accurate. Mourning the loss of older housing stock and streetscapes in Victoria's residential areas.

- Jim Kerr: This could apply to great swaths of the city with far-reaching effects. This should be done in specific areas first to see the consequences. Extreme caution must be used.
- Pamela Madoff: The initiatives put multi-family apartment buildings at risk. Need to consider the impact on a neighbourhood's broad demographic, with rental condos, high-end developments, and a mixture of residents. Need to consider who benefits from this, i.e. the property owner who can proceed with development. Acknowledge the desire for development, but public consultation is needed. If buildings do not have statutory public hearing requirements, there needs to be another way to ensure public consultation to build community along with building development.
- Malcolm MacLean: The models are used for economic analyses and are early concepts that will change over time. Further information and responses will come back to the Panel.
- Kirby Delaney: These policies will have far-reaching consequences for future generations.
- Steve Barber: Would like to see a photo of what was previously located at the Wilson Street development.
- Pamela Madoff: Suggested that members analyze Wilson Walk as a case study of what might occur should Missing Middle Housing proceed.

*Motion to adjourn: Steve Barber*

*Seconded: Jim Kerr*

*Adjournment: 2:28 pm*