

**CITY OF VICTORIA
HERITAGE ADVISORY PANEL
MEETING MINUTES
February 11th, 2025**

Present: Nathalie Picard
Katie McEvoy
Steve Barber
Ben Clinton-Baker
Liberty Brears
Valerie Lindholm
Veronica (Niki) Strong-Boag
Alissa Wrean (Chair)
Nathalie Lim Picard

Regrets: Deondre Smiles
Rosemary Sleigh

Guests: **Heritage Alteration Permit Application No. 00268 for 725 Vancouver Street**
Scott Williams (Owner)
Rezoning Application No.00882 Concurrent with Heritage Alteration Permit
with Variance Application No.00037 for 1306-1330 Broad St. & 615-625
Johnson Street
Anthony Quin (Director of Development at Chard), Bryon Chard (President and
CEO at Chard), Mark Thompson (MCM Architects – Partner), Aaron Petruic (MCM
Architects – Senior Associate), Chelsea Dunk (Donald Luxton Associates –
Director, Heritage Conservation)

Staff: Kristal Stevenot, Senior Heritage Planner
Laura Saretsky, Heritage Planner
Kamryn Allen, Heritage Administrative Assistant
Alicia Ferguson, Office Coordinator - Planning
Miko Betanzo, Senior Planner, Urban Design

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm.

1. Adoption of the Agenda

Moved: Steve Barber

Seconded: Veronica (Niki) Strong-Boag

Motion: That the February 11th, 2025, Heritage Advisory Panel Meeting Agenda be approved.

Carried Unanimously

2. Adoption of Minutes

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the December 12th, 2024, Meeting

Moved: Katie McEvoy

Seconded: Valerie Lindholm

Motion: That the December 12th, 2024, Heritage Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes be approved.

Carried Unanimously

2.2 Adoption of the Minutes of the January 14th, 2024, Meeting

Moved: Ben Clinton-Baker

Seconded: Katie McEvoy

Motion: That the January 14th, 2025, Heritage Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes be approved with an amendment to note Ben Clinton-Baker as Regrets under attendance.

Carried Unanimously

3. Business Arising from the Minutes

None.

4. Announcements

None.

5. Heritage Alteration Permit Application No. 00268 for 725 Vancouver Street

Staff provided a brief introduction to the Panel with a presentation.

Scott Williams, Owner, provided a presentation detailing his purchase of the building in 2009, the work done to date in alignment with the Heritage Foundation requirements, and the current work proposed.

Kamryn Allen Joined at 12:19pm

Alicia Ferguson left at 12:21pm

Panel Question comments

- This is a very reasonable application. Will the pony walls be reinforced internally with plywood as part of the seismic upgrade?
- Yes, a structural engineer has reviewed the requirements regarding the Heritage Foundation and its funding. However, I'm not sure of the specifics about whether plywood is included, but I can double-check the documents.
- Not 100% clear on what was said about how the insurance did not like wrought iron?
- Yes, we had difficulty finding an underwriter for the home insurance. When we finally secured one, they raised concerns about our sewer lateral, which runs from the back of the building to a city main made of cast iron. Although we've had it scoped and confirmed that it's functioning properly, the underwriter still decided to cancel our policy. I had to find a new underwriter with only one day left on my current policy, or we would have had to evict our three tenants. Each year when we renew, this same issue comes up with the underwriter. We're currently trying to address it by doing as much necessary and feasible work as possible.
- Lloyds was the company that would not insure us at first but then a different office with Lloyds was able to give us insurance.
- Has there been some thought put towards reusing some of the shingles where possible?

- Yes, however with the demolition, a lot of the cedar shingles are original, as soon as we touch them, they will start to fall apart so unfortunately, I don't think we will be able to, and the intent was always to replace with new.
- Was a very supportable application, and looking for comments on the windows, I think that modern windows are acceptable additions.
- Excellent presentation, it's the kind you really want to see where someone has really put some thought into it and is giving additional cost to make something so excellent.
- Incredibly comprehensive presentation, lots of care and work goes into this building.
- Not only required but helpful information was provided to us.

Moved: Steve Barber

Seconded: Valerie Lindholm

Motion: That the Heritage Advisory Panel recommend to Council that Heritage Alteration Permit Application No.00268 for 725 Vancouver Street be approved as presented.

Carried Unanimously

6. Rezoning Application No.00882 Concurrent with Heritage Alteration Permit with Variance Application No.00037 for 1306-1330 Broad St. & 615-625 Johnson Street.

Staff provided a brief introduction to the Panel with a presentation.

Mark Thompson provided a brief presentation.

Panel Question comments

- The panel proposed a question to staff in regard to the policy in relation to the Old Town Guidelines: Is there a clear standard for height and setbacks in this area? Would you consider Old Town a good example of where these standards are applied.
- The 15-meter setback is clear to me, but adhering to the guidelines in Old Town is more challenging. That's why they have those guidelines in place, to be interpreted alongside the design guidelines to help guide those decisions.
- Are there other design principles like this that is applying here?
- On page 19, the principle of good fit.
- Yes, there are many design principles at play here. We've considered the difference in height, aiming for the rooftop addition to be distinguishable, while also maintaining the architectural durability of the original materials. We focused on reinforcing the building's character and ensuring the prominence of the main façade remains slightly set back. We believe that using punched windows and changing the curtain wall to a more traditional window, similar to the existing design, is a better fit than the proposed mirrored wall.

Nathalie Lim Picard Left the meeting at 12:50pm

- If one looks at the original design, I note that the new addition on the windows appeared to have a concrete header which has been eliminated in the new design, why?
- We had many discussions on how to distinguish the addition, aiming for a more modern interpretation of the rectangular window idea. We felt that eliminating the header would give it a more contemporary look without detracting from the heritage details below. We thought the terracotta material was strong enough to maintain the connection, but by giving it a slightly more modern feel, we were able to keep that balance intact.

- The windows in the brick portion still have the brick window seals, they are there, and they do retain the same profile where they extend past the windows.
- Is there guidance that one of the strategies to minimize additional height is to limit materiality? Is that listed in the guidelines somewhere?
- It might not be in the guidelines, but it is a strategy that works to respond in a positive way to make that differential to the heritage elements and the proposed additions. Then you have a pallet to work with to reduce its impact but still make it compatible.
- The guidelines speak to the use of materials and textures and patterns that are interesting but what we wanted to do was allow the prominence of the historic facades to come forward by providing a lighter pallet with a texture to it that would hopefully recede.
- Why did they opt for square windows divided into four on the new addition, while the new windows were divided into three or thirds? What led to the decision to step away from that symmetry?
- The first goal was to create a visual distinction between the heritage elements and the new addition. Behind those windows is a hotel module, so we had to ensure they functioned properly. The design seemed to work well with the pattern we presented, and this approach helped reinforce the difference between the old and new elements. It was a compromise between program functionality and the heritage features we needed to incorporate.
- I have a problem with this application, with the overall development but I must recognise that council has approved it but if we look to the Old Town Guidelines, one is a new rooftop addition should not compete with a historic building in size, scale or design and should maintain the visual significance of the historic building within the streetscape. Secondly, an addition that radically exceeds the size and scale of a historic building or as a visually dominant design undermines the heritage value of the building in the district and I think the additional two stories proposed for this building does exactly that. I think it's just a bit too far. If we look at the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. Standard 11 says, conserve the heritage value and character defining elements in creating any new additions to a historic place. Related new construction make the new work physically and visually compatible and subordinate to. I would underline those words and make them distinguishable from the historic place, an addition that radically make the new part physically and visually compatible with subordinate to and again I would underline those words: subordinate and distinguishable from the historic place.
- If we go further into the question of exterior form, another part of the Standards discourages use that dramatically alters the exterior form. For example, demolishing the building structure and retaining only the street facades. I think adding an additional 2 story's undermines the historic significance of this very historic - façade. If we look at the section on exterior form, it says designing an addition that is compatible in terms of materials and massing with the exterior form and historic buildings recommended. What is not recommended, is designing an addition that has a negative impact on the heritage value of the historic building, and I think these additional stories do in fact do that.
- The window design is overly simplistic and too modern. It really needs some further refinement, there are actually some really good examples in the Old Town Guidelines that the architects would be wise to go back and take a look at these photographs.
- Not in support for the additional 2 stories in this application.
- If council accepts the application, a way to mitigate that additional mass would be to carve off the 2 rooms on the western side floors 7 & 8 to further set back from Johnson Street.
- I agree that the additional stories conflict with the Old Town Guidelines. I appreciate the use of setbacks to try to mitigate this, but the character-defining elements, particularly on

the South and North elevations, make the impact very obvious. These changes significantly alter the streetscape of Old Town, and if approved, it would set a precedent for more buildings exceeding the set height limit. This could lead to continued approvals for structures above the guidelines. I suggest considering the addition of more character-defining elements to better transition from the old to the new sections.

- Astonished that it was initially approved by council, I thought that the modernist elements detract rather attract to the historic elements and I am concerned about precedents to increase height in Old Town.
- Hard time supporting proposal because I'm focused on what the standards say as there is not too many places in BC where you have these height limits, so Victoria's Old Town is special like that. We want to keep it in place. We want to see the Old Town Guidelines consistently applied. Strategies need to be in place to mitigate that additional height. There are policy guidelines that discourages drastic changes in scale of the adjacent build on the South elevation there's a significant set back there. We need to either adopt these strategies or not apply them at all.

Moved: Valerie Lindholm

Seconded: Steve Barber

Motion: That the Heritage Advisory Panel recommend to Council that Heritage Alteration Permit with Variances application No.00037 for 1306-1330 Broad Street / 615-625 Johnson Street / Parts of 622 and 630 Yates Street does not sufficiently meet the applicable design guidelines and policies and should be declined and that the key areas that should be revised include:

- Recommend the applicant to go back to the Old Town Design guidelines. Application currently does not respect this. Specifically:
 - The design principle around human scale to ensure new buildings are limited to 15 meters are put in place (recognizing prior approval of 18.81 meters in 2021)
 - The design principle around authenticity to ensure that new buildings are distinguishable from the genuine historic buildings of Old Town while being sympathetic and compatible to the proportions, mass scale and rhythm
 - Recommend that in the first application they had addressed the mitigation of the curtain wall, if they were interested in resubmitting, they should reapply these strategies to mitigate the curtain wall
- The application does not meet the established Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

Carried Unanimously

7. Adjournment

Moved: Liberty Brears

Seconded: Valerie Lindholm

Motion: That the Heritage Advisory Panel on February 11th, 2025 Meeting Agenda be adjourned at 1:28pm.

Carried Unanimously