

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information, analysis and recommendations for a Heritage Alteration Permit with Variances Application for the property located at 727 Yates Street. The proposal is to allow for the conversion of an existing vacant heritage-designated commercial building to a mixed-use building with a two-and-a-half-storey addition for residential rental suites, and ground floor retail use. Variances are requested for a side yard setback and parking.

The following points were considered in assessing this Application:

- consistency with the *Official Community Plan, 2012 (OCP)* in terms of achieving the goal of protecting and celebrating Victoria's cultural and natural heritage resources
- consistency with the objectives of the Development Permit Area 2 (HC): Core Business in terms of supporting low-to-medium rise residential mixed-use buildings; and the conservation and enhancement of heritage value, special character and the significant historic buildings, features and characteristics of this area
- consistency with the *Downtown Core Area Plan, 2012 (DCAP)* supporting multi-residential development, new development that ensures sensitive integration with existing heritage properties along the 700 block of Yates Street, and the conservation of heritage values of the Downtown Core Area
- consistency with the *Yates Street 700 Block Guidelines for Buildings, Canopies, Awnings and Signs* in terms of proposing infill that complements rather than contrasts with the block's heritage buildings
- consistency with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*
- the proposal to reduce the side yard setback, and to not provide vehicle parking, is supportable based on the existing condition of the property.

The Application was reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Panel at its June 12, 2018 meeting and was recommended for approval.

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposal

The proposal is to present Council with information, analysis and recommendations regarding a Heritage Alteration Permit with Variances Application for the property located at 727 Yates Street, also known as the Hall Block.

The proposal is to allow for the conversion of an existing vacant heritage-designated commercial building to a mixed-use building with a two-and-a-half-storey addition for residential rental suites, and ground floor retail use. Variances are requested for side yard setback and parking.

The adjacent Churchill Building at 719-725 Yates Street is owned by the same developer, providing the opportunity to create internal shared circulation and access to bicycle parking (long term) in the adjacent building.

The proposal includes the following major design components:

- ground floor commercial with a single entry
- 11 new one bedroom units (rental) in a two-and-a-half-storey addition, accessed from the existing entrance for the adjacent building, with the third, fourth and fifth storeys stepped back

- seismic upgrade of the building
- preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of the existing façade, including stripping existing paint from the brick façade and applying a clear seal
- new cladding materials that include concrete block, high-density fibre reinforced cement panel cladding, metal cladding
- glass balcony guardrails
- translucent glass canopies.

The following data table compares the proposal with the existing CA-4 Zone, Central Area Commercial Office District. An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal is less stringent than the existing Zone. A double asterisk indicates an existing non-conforming condition.

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Zone Standard CA-4
Site area (m ²) – minimum	1451.5	N/A
Density (Floor Space Ratio) – maximum	2.86:1	3:1
Height (m) total – maximum	16.91	43
Height (m) – setbacks/street wall maximum	10.73 **	10 m height limit on a street and then stepping back 1 cm per 5 cm above 10 m
Storeys – maximum	5	N/A
Setbacks – minimum		
Side (east)	0.851 *	Setbacks required for one side yard only. Buildings above 15 m in height require a 4.5m side yard
Vehicle parking stalls – minimum		
Schedule C	0 *	8
Visitor vehicle parking included in the overall units	0 *	1
Proposed Schedule C	0 *	10 plus 1 visitor
Bicycle parking stalls – minimum		
Schedule C		
Class 1	12	None required
Class 2	0	None required

Zoning Criteria	Proposal	Zone Standard CA-4
Bicycle parking stalls – minimum		
Proposed Schedule C		
Class 1	12 *	16
Class 2	0	0

Affordable Housing Impacts

The applicant proposes the creation of 11 new residential units, which would increase the overall supply of housing in the area. While the applicant has stated that these will be rental units, the applicant has decided to enter into a housing agreement.

Sustainability Features

The building is currently vacant. By re-occupying the building, it will ensure the critical building systems are operative and maintained. The rehabilitation of the building, and the preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of the façade preserves the embodied energy of the existing structure.

Heritage Impact Assessment - Heritage Property

The 1897 Hall Block is a heritage-designated two-storey brick commercial building articulated by two decorative cornice panels and an arched central upper storey window. The building was constructed during the height of the pre-World War One real estate boom and is valued as a reflection of the surge of development that characterized Victoria's expanding gateway economy. The proposed rehabilitation includes consolidating the heritage building with the adjacent heritage buildings at 719 Yates and 721-725 Yates Street and constructing a two-and-one-half-storey infill addition above roof level, recessed from the historic front façade along Yates Street. The Portland Hotel (721-725 Yates Street) and the Finch Building (719 Yates Street) are heritage-designated.

Conservation Strategy

The Hall Block is one of the oldest surviving commercial structures in the block. The Application includes a Conservation Plan (attached) for 727 Yates Street prepared by Donald Luxton & Associates in August 2017. The primary intent is to rehabilitate the Hall Block storefront based on available archival photographs and drawing, preserve character-defining elements, restore missing or deteriorated elements and construct a two-and-one-half-storey infill addition above roof level recessed from the historic front façade along Yates Street. The Conservation Plan provides strategies that include aspects of preservation, rehabilitation and restoration, conservation guidelines and recommendations, as well as a maintenance plan.

Active Transportation Impacts

The Application proposes the following features which support active transportation:

- 12 bicycle parking stalls.

Public Realm Improvements

No public realm improvements are proposed in association with this Heritage Alteration Permit with Variances Application.

Community Consultation

Consistent with the *Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) Procedures for Processing Rezoning and Variances Applications*, on May 10, 2018 the Application was referred for a 30-day comment period to the *Community Land Use Committee (CALUC)*. At the time of writing this report, a letter from the CALUC had not been received.

This Application proposes variances, therefore, in accordance with the City's *Land Use Procedures Bylaw*, it requires notice, sign posting and a meeting of Council to consider the variances.

ANALYSIS

The following sections provide a summary of the Application's consistency with the relevant City policies.

Official Community Plan

The proposed development outlined in the Application is consistent with the Official Community Plan (OCP) because it contributes to the goal of protecting and celebrating Victoria's cultural and natural heritage resources. It is also in accordance with Place Character Features, which envision three to five-storey street walls with the upper storeys set back, and continuity of commercial uses, preferably retail, at grade.

Development Permit Area

The *Official Community Plan*, 2012 (OCP) identifies this property in Development Permit Area 2 (HC): Core Business. The key objectives of this designation are to revitalize the central business district through high-rise commercial buildings and low-to-medium rise residential mixed-use buildings; conserve and enhance the heritage value, special character and the significant historic buildings, features and characteristics of the area; and enhance the area through quality architecture, landscape and urban design while responding to its historic context.

Design guidelines that apply to Development Permit Area 2 (HC) are the *Downtown Core Area Plan*, 2012 (DCAP), *Yates Street 700 Block Guidelines for Buildings, Canopies, Awnings and Signs* (1984), *Advisory Design Guidelines for Buildings, Signs and Awnings* (1981), and the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

Downtown Core Area Plan

The DCAP identifies this site within the Central Business District (CBD), which encourages higher density up to 72m in height (19-24 storeys) that helps to attract and retain a range of supporting commercial uses and complementary uses, such as multi-residential development. The DCAP also encourages higher density along Yates Street, and the CBD (Central Business District) policy supports new development that ensures sensitive integration with existing heritage properties along the 700 block of Yates Street. Although the zone allows a maximum of 43m, the proposal is for a sensitive rooftop addition that integrates with existing heritage properties with limited visibility from the street.

The proposed development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the *DCAP* in relation to heritage conservation which states:

- 7.3 Conserve heritage values of the Downtown Core Area and its character-defining elements such as individual buildings, collections of buildings, streetscapes, structures and features.
- 7.7 Continue to support the conversion of the upper storeys of heritage-designated property from non-residential uses to residential uses in strategic locations within the Downtown Core Area that serve to support the policies of this Plan.
- 7.18 Support new development that conserves and enhances the form, character and features of heritage property and areas, where controlled and regulated in the *Downtown Core Area Plan*.

Yates Street 700 Block Guidelines for Buildings, Canopies, Awnings and Signs

The proposal is consistent with the *Yates Street 700 Block Guidelines for Buildings, Canopies, Awnings and Signs* which encourage infill that will complement rather than contrast with the block's heritage buildings. Aspects of particular importance are exterior materials, massing, roofline, detailing, fenestration and rhythm.

Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

The Hall Block is a small, two-storey brick commercial building located on the south side of Yates Street. It is articulated by two decorative cornice panels, and an arched central upper storey. The building is heritage-designated, and is valued for being one of the earliest surviving buildings along the 700 Yates block. It is a good example of the type of modest commercial building erected in the late nineteenth century as the city grew steadily eastward, away from the waterfront.

Designed by in the late Victorian style by architect John Teague for local developer Dr. Frank Walter Hall, the building is important to Victoria's commercial downtown because it exemplifies the heritage character of the City before the turn of the twentieth century, making it a significant contributor to the integrity of the historic streetscape in this area.

A Statement of Significance for the Hall Block is included with this report as part of the Heritage Conservation Plan prepared by Don Luxton & Associates, and details the heritage value and character-defining elements that are protected under the associated heritage designation bylaw for 727 Yates Street.

The proposed development will see the existing facade of the Hall Block preserved, rehabilitated and restored to conserve and enhance the heritage value, special character, features and characteristics the Hall Block contributes to the scale and rhythm of the street and to the context of the historic area.

The following are the sections of the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* that are relevant to this Application:

General Standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation and Restoration

- a. Conserve *heritage value* by adopting an approach calling for *minimal intervention*.
- b. Find a use for an *historic place* that requires minimal or no change to its *character-defining elements*.

- c. Maintain *character-defining elements* on an ongoing basis. Repair character-defining elements by reinforcing their materials using recognized conservation methods. Replace in kind any extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements, where there are surviving *prototypes*.
- d. Make any *intervention* needed to preserve *character-defining elements* physically and visually compatible with the *historic place* and identifiable on close inspection. Document any intervention for future reference.
- e. Repair rather than replace *character-defining elements*. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair, and where sufficient physical evidence exist, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements. Where there is insufficient physical evidence, make the form, material and detailing of the new elements compatible with the character of the *historic place*.
- f. Repair rather than replace *character-defining elements* from the *restoration* period. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound version of the same elements.
- g. Replace missing features from the *restoration* period with new features whose forms, materials and detailing are based on sufficient physical, documentary and/or oral evidence.

Regulatory Considerations

Side Yard Setback Reduction

The CA-4 Zone requires a 4.5m side yard setback on the east side. The building at 727 Yates Street was built to the front and side property lines, with a paved pathway along the side elevation to the east. The variance is supportable based on the physical constraints of the existing condition of the property.

Parking Reduction

The CA-4 Zone requires eight vehicular parking stalls, which also includes one visitor parking stall. However, meeting this zone standard would require alterations to the heritage-designated building that would negatively impact the character-defining elements and overall integrity of the building. The variance is supportable based on the need to preserve the heritage value of the building and to ensure the overall character of the building is maintained.

Heritage Advisory Panel

The Heritage Advisory Panel reviewed the Application at the meeting of June 12, 2018 (minutes attached). A motion to recommend to Council that the Application be “approved as presented” was carried.

Resource Impacts

The applicant intends to apply to the City’s Building Incentive Program and the Heritage Tax Incentive Program administered by the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust.

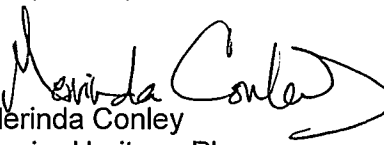
CONCLUSIONS


Whereas the proposed alterations do not have a negative impact on the historic features or the character of the Heritage-Designated building and have minimal visibility from street level, and whereas the existing building has physical constraints regarding the east setback and parking, it is recommended that Council consider approving Heritage Alteration Permit Application No. 00008 for the property at 727 Yates Street.

ALTERNATE MOTION

That Council decline Heritage Alteration Permit Application No. 00008 for the property located at 727 Yates Street.


Respectfully submitted,


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Development Services Division


Jonathan Tinney, Director
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Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


July 6, 2018

List of Attachments:

- Attachment A: Subject Map
- Attachment B: Aerial Map
- Attachment C: Plans date stamped May 24, 2018
- Attachment D: Applicant's letter dated May 24, 2018
- Attachment E: Conservation Plan dated August 2017
- Attachment F: Draft Heritage Advisory Panel Meeting Minutes from June 12, 2018.