



John Dam & Associates  
Building Conservation Engineering

**840 Fort Street**

**HERITAGE CONSERVATION PLAN**



Prepared for:

**Salient (840 Fort) Properties Ltd.**  
Suite #225 – 209 Carrall Street  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V6B 2J2

Prepared by:

**John Dam & Associates Inc.**  
2884 Gorge View Drive  
Victoria, British Columbia  
V9A 2H9

August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018  
#1027.003

**Received**  
City of Victoria

**AUG 01 2018**

Planning & Development Department  
Development Services Division

## Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	History	2
3.0	Statement of Significance	3
4.0	Terms of Reference	5
5.0	Conservation Recommendations	8
6.0	Conclusion	11

## 1.0 Introduction

### **840 Fort Street, Victoria – Sawyer Building –Protected by Covenant**

The two-storey, Edwardian façade on upper Fort Street reflects in its location, design, and materials, the historic character of Victoria as it evolved through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

At the request of Salient (840 Fort) Properties Ltd. (the Owner), John Dam & Associates (JDA) has been retained to assist with the conservation of the historic façade, providing a Statement of Significance and this Heritage Conservation Plan, for the City of Victoria to consider towards an anticipated Heritage Revitalization Agreement. Contained in this plan is a brief summary on the history and significance of the building, suggested conservation guidelines, and the proposed scope of conservation work including appropriate recommendations.

As part of the Heritage Revitalization Agreement, the Owner intends to designate the building facade.

## 2.0 History

Prior to the construction of the existing building, the site was already identified, as early as 1901, as a paint works location.

In 1908, a building permit was issued to Staneland Co. Ltd. for a one-storey wood frame structure.

On December 21st, 1909, a permit without an attached architect or builder name was issued for a two-storey wood and brick, store and office building. Strategically located along the Fort Street corridor, Walter E. Staneland and his brother Frank were preparing to take advantage of the pre-World War 1 real estate boom, setting up shop providing paints from England, varnishes from New York, and window glass along with paint and glazier supplies.

Two years later, it is understood that the widening of Fort Street required the local businesses to set back their front façades. In 1911, Charles Watkins Elwood was retained to draft the necessary details. On the drawings, the note 'present materials used for new front' suggests that the façade was simply moved back and not redesigned.

Business remained well enough for Walter to build his residence of 'Ardrossan' at the corner of Fort Street and Richmond Avenue. It was not until after WWII, in 1946, that Walter would sell the business and building to Mowat-Grant Ltd, a subsidiary of Douglas Paint in Vancouver.

Continuing to operate as a retail store supplying paint and paint supplies, Mowat-Grant would occupy the building as a division of the Glidden Co. Ltd through the 60's until 1969, when Sawyer Sewing Machines Ltd. would move in and provide the building with its' common name, the Sawyer Block, for the next 35 years.

Further renovations to the front façade were completed with the purchase of the building by D.W. Sawyer for his new business. The storefront was altered to relocate the main store entrance to the east corner alongside a second entrance that would lead directly to a flight of stairs to the second floor.

In the 1970's, the building was subdivided into 4 units offering space to a variety of retailers and professional firms including Henri's Tailors through the late 70's and early 80's and Victoria Bailiffs through the 80's into the early 90's. Through the 90's a variety of non-descript businesses would occupy the space with Sawyer Sewing Machines until 2005 when the building is noted to be vacant.

Today, the façade is a testament of the conservation of a historic 'building' with original materials and assemblies interwoven with restoration and renewal work utilizing contemporary materials and assemblies to provide the current character of the building. It is this storied faced that will be preserved.



### 3.0 Statement of Significance

#### Description

The two-storey, Edwardian façade of the Sawyer Building is a fine representative of the working class, retail zoning indicative of upper Fort Street. Located on the north side of Fort Street near the Quadra Street crossing, its' presence among a collection of old and new buildings reflects the characteristic diversity of development that has been allowed to occur there.

#### Heritage Value

The Sawyer Building is valued for its mainstay as a commercial building, offering paint and paint supplies to the retail consumer for a period of 60 years and then sewing machines and supplies for the next 35 years. Constructed in 1909, Walter E. Staneland, along with his brother Frank, was preparing to take advantage of the pre-World War 1 real estate boom, providing paints, varnishes, and associated supplies. Two years later, in 1911, Charles Watkins Elwood was commissioned to draft details to set back the front façade. It is believed that this work was commissioned to accommodate the widening of Fort Street. The drawings noted that the present materials of the original façade were to be utilized in the new façade. In 1946, Walter would sell the business and building to Mowat-Grant Ltd. Continuing to operate as a retail store supplying paint and paint supplies, Mowat-Grant would occupy the building until 1969. Sawyer Sewing Machines Ltd. then moved in and provided the building with its' title for the next 35 years. Further alterations to the storefront entrance, including relocating the main entrance, were completed at this time to accommodate the needs of the new enterprise. In the 1970's, the building was subdivided into additional units offering space to a variety of retailers and professional firms. Through the 90's, a variety of non-descript businesses would occupy the space with Sawyer Sewing Machines until 2005 when the building is noted to be vacant.

The location of 840 Fort Street manifests the development of Victoria's gateway economy. Walter Staneland strategically located his building along the arterial commercial and transit corridor of Fort Street that would link traffic flowing from the downtown core to the outlying neighbourhoods of Rockland and Jubilee, taking advantage of the streetcar system that was constructed in the 1890's to service the Royal Jubilee Hospital. Today, the Sawyer Building is located in the transition between the Core Business and Corridor Heritage areas adding to a blend of modest historic and modern buildings that provide a characteristic streetscape that transcends the value of the individual buildings themselves.

The Sawyer Building is an example of a modest, Edwardian, commercial style, typical of the era and location on upper Fort Street. Despite the layers of alteration, restoration and renewal works, the street façade notably retains many of the buildings' original character defining elements including the wood frame, store front glazing with large glass panes beneath multi pane transom windows, the cast iron columns delineating the glazing bays, and the sheet metal cornices providing horizontal definition.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The key elements that define the heritage character of 840 Fort Street and support its' heritage values are:

- Nearly a century of continuous use as commercial retail space
- Location along the heritage corridor of Fort Street connecting the downtown town core to the Rockland and Jubilee neighbourhoods, enhancing the diverse character of the local streetscape.
- Modest, functional, two-storey, Edwardian design and detailing
- Triple, sheet-metal cornices defining the street front facade
- Cast iron columns delineating the storefront glazing
- Wood frame commercial storefront glazing
- Proportionally spaced, second storey window openings



## 4.0 Terms of Reference

840 Fort Street is an unlisted, though protected by covenant, historic, commercial facade located on upper Fort Street amongst a diverse collection of old and new commercial buildings. It is a fine example of the modest Edwardian masonry building with a double sheet metal cornices above cast iron columns defining the wood frame storefront glazing.

### Standards and Guidelines

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (second edition) is the primary resource used to determine the appropriate conservation work on such buildings, especially when anticipating adding the building to the community heritage register or designating it as a heritage building. Referring to these guidelines, there are three steps to be taken during the conservation decision-making process: Determine the Primary Treatment, Review the Standards, and Follow the Guidelines.

When determining the primary treatment, there are three courses of action that can be followed overarching the entire conservation project and/or addressing individual assemblies. These courses of action include *Preservation*, *Rehabilitation*, and *Restoration*.

*Preservation* involves stabilizing and maintaining the existing form of the building or structure and its constituent materials and assemblies. This may include both short term measures to provide necessary protection, or long term measures to minimize long term deterioration.

*Rehabilitation* entails renewing the building, or particular assembly, to allow for continued, compatible coteremporary use while retaining the historic significance of the place, including all character defining elements. This course of action may also include the replacement of missing historic elements or the sensitive addition of elements compatible in style and character.

*Restoration* of a historic place would bring the place, or identified assembly, back to a period of time in which it once existed, accurately revealing or recovering missing elements while removing any elements or assemblies that detract from the selected time period representation.

The Standards provide guidance for consideration on any conservation project. A summary of the general standards and additional standards pertaining particularly to rehabilitation and restoration is as follows:

#### General

1. Conserve the heritage value of an historic place. Do not remove, replace, or substantially alter its intact or repairable character-defining elements. Do not move a part of an historic place if its current location is a character-defining element.
2. Conserve changes to an historic place that, over time, have become character-defining elements in their own right.
3. Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention.

4. Recognize each historic place as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Do not create a false sense of historical development by adding elements from other historic places or properties, or by combining features of the same property that never coexisted.
5. Find a use for an historic place that requires minimal or no change to its character-defining elements.
6. Protect and, if necessary, stabilize an historic place until any subsequent intervention is undertaken. Protect and preserve archaeological resources in place. Where there is potential for disturbing archaeological resources, take mitigation measures to limit damage and loss of information.
7. Evaluate the existing condition of character-defining elements to determine the appropriate intervention needed. Use the gentlest means possible for any intervention. Respect heritage value when undertaking an intervention.
8. 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.
9. 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.

#### **Additional - Rehabilitation**

10. Repair rather than replace character-defining elements. 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 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.
11. Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to an historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from, the historic place.
12. Create any new additions or related new construction so that the essential form and integrity of an historic place will not be impaired if the new work is removed in the future.

#### **Additional – Restoration**

13. 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 versions of the same elements.



14. 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.

Upon determining the course of action and understanding the standard principles, specific decisions on how to best carry out conservation work can be developed with reference to the guidelines. Separate guidelines are provided for four types of places - Cultural Landscapes, Archaeological Sites, Buildings, and Engineering Works. In addition, there are guidelines for the conservation of materials. However, on any given site, a combination of guidelines is often appropriate. In general, the guidelines follow a series of steps starting with understanding the character-defining elements, documenting these elements, then protecting and maintaining them, and, if necessary, stabilizing, repairing and/or replacing them.

### **Preservation Briefs**

A recommended secondary resource for all conservation projects is the series of Preservation Briefs produced by the US Department of the Interior - National Park Service. These briefs, available online, provide detailed technical guidance on how to best address the deterioration of historic assemblies and materials such as *Roofing* and *Wooden Windows* and improving historic buildings for contemporary use such as, *Improving Energy Efficiency* and *Controlling unwanted Moisture*.

### **British Columbia Building Code**

When completing conservation work on an historic building, important considerations may have to be made to bring the building up to current code standards, particularly when addressing matters of building and life safety. Such considerations may necessitate significant alteration work that may impact that historic character of the building and its character-defining elements. It is important to know the specific requirements of the local government pertaining to the BCBC and how allowable equivalencies can be utilized to meet these requirements.

### **Energy Efficiency Act**

The Energy Efficiency Act was implemented to provide guidance towards improving the energy performance of products sold in BC, including buildings. Though amendments have been enacted to exempt heritage buildings from the Act, it is always recommended that energy efficiency measures be considered, where possible, in conservation work.

### **Homeowner Protection Act**

The Homeowner Protection Act and Regulations, was developed and implemented to improve the quality of residential construction and consumer protection for buyers of new homes. In addition to new homes, this act also applies to residential renovation, with the caveat of two amendments provided to protect the heritage value of new homes: a warranty provider can exclude components of the building, and substantial renovation work has to occur to classify the home as new.

## 5.0 Conservation Recommendations

The drawings produced by Charles Watkins Elwood provide the earliest evidence of the original appearance of the building with no drawings or photographs pre-dating his proposed alterations. The earliest known photograph of the building is of when it was occupied by Mowat Grant Ltd. The appearance of the building in this photograph suggests alterations were already made including the refinishing of the upper storey and the addition of signs. In 1969, Sawyer Sewing Machines Ltd. would become the primary tenant of the building, altering the storefront while providing it with its historic namesake. In the following years the building would be subdivided into additional units to provide space to multiple commercial and professional enterprises. The building has since been restored to better reflect what it may have originally looked like.

A brief review of the existing building determined that the facade is in fair to good condition. As such, significant renewal works beyond integrating the facade into a new building structure are not planned to be carried out.

### 5.1 Site

840 Fort Street exists at the south end of a lot on the north side of upper Fort Street. The historic facade contributes significantly to the varied streetscape identified as a character defining element.



#### Proposal – Preservation

It is intended that the facade as it currently exists will be retained along with a short set back of both side walls.

The redevelopment of the lot is to be undertaken with great care to the preservation of the existing facade maintaining both the historic materials and construction in the current configuration.



## 5.2 Building

The two-storey building façade constructed of clay brick masonry with sheet metal cornices over wood frame windows is in fair to good condition. Both the design and material of the façade have been identified as character defining.

### 5.2.1 Exterior Form

The façade is a good example of Edwardian commercial design and materials, relying on simple, material geometry and assembly symmetry for its character defining form.



#### Proposal – Preservation/Rehabilitation

The masonry wall along with the location and orientation of the primary assemblies will be preserved. The wood frame storefront glazing will be rehabilitated to accommodate improved access from the sidewalk and provide for multiple points of egress.

All rehabilitation work is to be sympathetic to the original design and materials while providing improved features. It is recommended that the storefront glazing utilize wood framing to reflect the historic character of the original retail space.

### 5.2.2 Exterior Walls

The painted, exterior clay brick walls support three tiers of restored sheet metal cornice. Both the clay brick masonry and sheet metal cornices are identified as a character defining elements, though the cornices are contemporary replicas and not original.





#### Proposal – Preservation

The existing clay brick façade including short returns on both side elevations as well as the sheet metal cornice are intended to remain unchanged. Any observed deterioration will be repaired using historically sensitive materials and methods.

It is recommended that all work on the exterior walls be minimized, completing renewal work only where necessary. Any restoration work that is undertaken is to be completed with materials that match with the original and existing materials.

#### 5.2.3 Fenestration

The fenestration, excepting the location of the cast iron columns and multi-lite transom windows, is not original to the building. The upper wood frame windows reflect a historic design with historic wood frames but both the drawings by C.W. Elwood and the earliest known photograph of the building show a single lower lite beneath double upper lites. The storefront glazing also shows the main entrance in a central bay and accessed by a flight of steps.



#### Preservation/Rehabilitation

The cast iron columns and transom glazing will be preserved as they are with new storefront glazing infilled to support improved and additional egress. The main entrance will be restored to its original location though lowered to be at grade. Two additional entrances will provide egress through each side bay. The upper wood framed windows, despite not being original, will be preserved.

It is recommended that all work on the fenestration and trim material be minimized, retaining as much of the original/existing material as possible. The rehabilitation work that is undertaken is to be completed with materials that match with the original and existing materials.

It is recommended that all conservation work be completed by qualified contractors having past experience with the proposed scope of work. In general, retention of as much of the original material as possible is recommended and, where necessary, renewal materials match the appearance and properties of the existing materials.

## 6.0 Conclusion

It is intended that the current building façade at 840 Fort Street will be primarily preserved with the anticipation of rehabilitation work being limited to the storefront glazing, improving access and increasing egress into the building. This project is looking to designate the finished works on this historic façade, conserving both the heritage building and streetscape of upper Fort Street.

This report was prepared for Salient Projects 2016 Ltd. for the purpose of securing a heritage revitalization agreement on the property at 840 Fort Street. It is not for the use or benefit of, nor may it be relied upon, by any person or entity without written permission of JDA or Salient Projects 2016 Ltd.

It is trusted that the information in this plan satisfies the expectations and requirements of both Salient Projects 2016 Ltd. and the City of Victoria. Please do not hesitate to contact JDA should you have any questions or comments pertaining to this plan and its associated recommendations.

Sincerely,  


John Dam, Principal  
Building Conservation Engineer  
B.A.Sc., M.Sc., P.Eng., CAHP