



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of January 24, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** January 10, 2019

From: Andrea Hudson, Acting Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development

Subject: **Heritage Designation Application No. 000176 for 819-823 Fort Street**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the designation of the property located at 819-823 Fort Street, pursuant to Section 611 of the *Local Government Act*, as a Municipal Heritage Site, and that first and second reading of the Heritage Designation Bylaw be considered by Council and a Public Hearing date be set, concurrent to consideration of Rezoning Application No. 00621 if it is approved.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

In accordance with Section 611 of the *Local Government Act*, Council may designate real property, in whole or in part, as protected property.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Council with information, analysis and recommendations regarding an owner request to designate the exterior of the building located at 819-823 Fort Street. The commercial building was built in 1908, with a second storey expansion in 1913. It contributes to the historic character of the Fort Street corridor.

The designation of this building is generally consistent with Section 8: "Placemaking (Urban Design and Heritage)" of the *Official Community Plan* (2012), with Section 7, "Heritage" of the *Downtown Core Area Plan*, and with the *Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework*.

The application was reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Panel at its June 12, 2018 meeting, and the Panel recommended that Council approve the designation.

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposal

The property located at 819-823 Fort Street, also referred to as the Turkish Bath House, is occupied by a two-storey commercial building built in 1908 and expanded with a second-storey addition in 1913. The exterior façade of 819-823 Fort Street has maintained key original features, especially above the ground storey. Its character-defining elements include its

location on the south side of Fort Street; its siting on the property lines, with no setbacks; its continuous commercial use; its commercial form, scale and massing; its masonry construction; and its Edwardian-era architectural features and original fenestration. The building is also valued for its vernacular Edwardian-era design by prolific architect Thomas Hooper working in partnership with C. Elwood Watkins at the firm Hooper & Watkins. The project is also associated with the pre-World War One real estate boom that is connected to Victoria's status as a gateway economy.

The building's original Swedish owner, G. Bergstrom Bjornfelt, constructed the building to contain a Turkish Bath House and Swedish Massage Parlour. Bjornfelt studied similar facilities all over Europe in order to return to Victoria with the latest design ideas. The building was originally outfitted with tile floors and marble walls and staffed entirely by Swedes. The business operated for five years until the building changed ownership following construction of the second storey. The tile floors and marble were removed in subsequent renovations. Since the original occupancy, a number of businesses have occupied the ground floor, including a cake store, furniture store and curiosity shop. It is currently vacant.

Condition/Economic Viability

The ground floor of the building has been altered over time and the storefront is currently a modern aluminum assembly. A Heritage Conservation Plan is attached to this report and details aspects of preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of the façade that the applicant intends to undertake to conserve and protect the character-defining elements, including:

- preservation of overall form, scale and massing of the front façade
- removal of later materials to reveal existing original historic materials on the storefront and rehabilitate the storefront in a manner sympathetic to the historic appearance of the building based on archival images
- preservation and repair of masonry elements with missing elements replaced to match existing
- preservation of all metalworks, such as the projecting cornice and dentils, midline crown and storefront cornice
- retention and repair of original storefront transoms
- rehabilitation of upper wood-frame windows
- restoration of appropriate historic colour scheme for the exterior painted finishes.

The façade would be incorporated into a mixed-use development that maintains ground-level, open two-storey high commercial space with a rear retail mezzanine, and which will advance concurrently with this application for heritage designation.

ANALYSIS

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

Official Community Plan

The designation of this building is consistent with the *Official Community Plan* (2012), which in the section entitled, "Placemaking (Urban Design and Heritage)", states:

Goals

8 (B) *Victoria's cultural and natural heritage resources are protected and celebrated.*

Broad Objectives

- 8 (j) *That heritage property is conserved as resources with value for present and future generations.*
- 8 (l) *That heritage and cultural values are identified, celebrated, and retained through community engagement.*

City Form

- 8.6 *Conserve and enhance the heritage value, character and special features of areas, districts, streetscapes, cultural landscapes and individual properties throughout the city.*
- 8.11 *Determine the heritage value of areas, districts, streetscapes, cultural landscape and individual properties using the Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework as identified in Figure 12.*

Buildings and Sites

- 8.51 *Continue to give consideration to tools available under legislation to protect or conserve heritage property including, but not limited to: heritage designation bylaws; listing on the heritage register; temporary protection; heritage alteration permits; heritage revitalization agreements; design guidelines; and, the protection of views of heritage landmark buildings from public vantage points as identified in Map 8, and to be determined in future local area plans.*
- 8.54 *Continue to work with senior government, community and business partners to identify, protect and conserve property of heritage value.*

Downtown Core Area Plan

The designation of the building is consistent with Section 7: "Heritage" of the *Downtown Core Area Plan 2011* which states:

Heritage - Objectives

- 1 *Retain, protect and improve real property with aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual value and heritage character as a benefit to the public.*

Areas and Districts - Policies and Actions

- 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.*

Buildings and Sites - Policies and Actions

- 7.20. *Continue to work with the private sector to identify, protect and conserve property and areas with heritage value in the Downtown Core Area.*
- 7.28. *Produce and update, as required, Statements of Significance for properties listed on the Heritage Register in the Downtown Core Area.*

Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework

A key policy of the OCP includes the determination of heritage value using a values-based approach. In this regard, a city-wide thematic framework (OCP Fig. 12) was developed and incorporated into the OCP to identify the key civic historic themes. The *Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework* functions as a means to organize and define historical events, to identify representative historic places, and to place sites, persons and events in an overall context. The thematic framework recognizes a broad range of values under which city-wide themes can be

articulated. A Heritage Value assessment with consideration of the *Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework* is incorporated into the Statement of Significance.

Statement of Significance

A Statement of Significance describing the historic place, its attributes, and history is attached to this report.

Heritage Advisory Panel

The Heritage Advisory Panel reviewed this application for heritage designation at its June 12, 2018 meeting and recommended approval.

Resource Impacts

The heritage designation will result in an application to the City's Building Incentive Program administered by the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust.

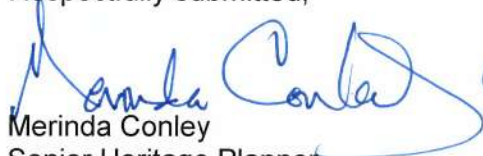
CONCLUSIONS

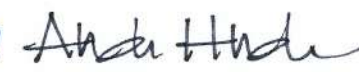
This application for the heritage designation of the property located at 819-823 Fort Street as a Municipal Heritage Site is for a building that is a good example of Victoria's commercial development from the early 20th century, which is associated with a prolific architect from the period and a unique historical business. Staff therefore recommend that Council consider approving the Heritage Designation Application for the building located at 819-823 Fort Street.

ALTERNATE MOTION


That Council decline Heritage Designation Application No. 000176 for the property located at 819-823 Fort Street.

Respectfully submitted,


Merinda Conley
Senior Heritage Planner
Development Services Division


Andrea Hudson, Acting Director
Sustainable Planning and Community
Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:


Date: Jan 17, 2019

List of Attachments

- Attachment A: Subject Map
- Attachment B: Aerial Map
- Attachment C: Photographs
- Attachment D: Statement of Significance
- Attachment E: Letter from the applicant, date stamped June 1, 2018
- Attachment F: Minutes from the Heritage Advisory Panel, dated June 12, 2018.