Draft Old Town Design Guidelines
New Buildings and Additions to Existing Buildings (2019)

Background

• Council direction provided in February 2018 and project began in April 2018
• Focus on developing design guidelines for new buildings and additions to existing buildings
• Integration of additional design guidelines for Chinatown, Old Commercial District and the Waterfront
• Initial meetings held with key stakeholders to identify potential improvements and request involvement on project Working Group
What we heard…

• Provide improved clarity and interpretation
• Current document does not contain clear guidance or direction
• Current document does not address additions to heritage buildings or rooftop additions
• Build upon existing document as well as Standards & Guidelines
• Allow for creativity in design – do not pre design buildings
• Ensure good fit within historic context
• Maintain and reinforce the area’s low-scale building height (3-5 storeys)
• Support guidelines with photographs and illustrations that include contemporary building designs

Approach

• Working Group established with representatives from:
  • Heritage Advisory Panel
  • Urban Development Institute
  • Victoria Downtown Residents Association
  • Advisory Design Panel
  • Hallmark Heritage Society
  • Victoria Civic Heritage Trust
  • Downtown Victoria Business Association

• Working Group met three times and also attended a walking tour.
• City retained Steve Barber (former Senior Heritage Planner) as a project consultant to provide technical expertise, best practices and support engagement efforts.
Engagement and Consultation

- Workshops and meetings with Working Group
- Old Town Walking Tour
- Public Open House
- Project Website
- Presentations to stakeholder organizations
- Guidelines refined based on feedback

OTDG Structure

1. Introduction – Historic importance, urban structure and future of Old Town
2. Old Town Context – Statements of Significance and Character Defining Elements for Old Commercial District, Chinatown and Waterfront
3. How to Use the Guidelines – Purpose and structure of the guidelines and their relation to the statements of significance and character defining elements for each sub area
4. Design Principles – Basis for the design guidelines
5. Design Guidelines for New Buildings and Additions
6. Design Guidelines for Rooftop Additions on Heritage Buildings
Design Principles

The design guidelines are premised on achieving the following principles, which provide the basis for the design of new buildings and additions to existing buildings to ensure they are responsive and complementary to the existing historic character, local topography, urban design and sense of place that is evident throughout Old Town.

- **Scale**
  - To integrate new building designs that exploit, complement and contribute positively to the historic character of Old Town, while not encouraging unnecessary height, bulk or mass.

- **Contextual Fit**
  - To ensure new building designs and do not dominate or detract from the surrounding streetscape.

- **Urban Design Considerations**
  - To encourage new building designs that are responsive to the existing urban fabric and contribute positively to the character of the street.

- **Safety and Security**
  - To enhance the safety and security of the area through the use of design strategies that promote a sense of connectivity and accessibility.

- **Sustainability**
  - To promote environmentally sustainable building practices and materials.

- **Resilience**
  - To ensure that new building designs are resilient to natural and other disasters.

- **Community Engagement**
  - To involve the community in the design process to ensure that the new building designs reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

Design Guidelines (New Buildings and Additions)

**Topic Areas and Intent**

Building Have Scale and Size

- To ensure new buildings are proportionate to their surroundings, considering the materials used and the context.

- To avoid the creation of imposing or out-of-scale structures.

Street Design

- To create streetscapes that are welcoming and inviting, promoting pedestrian-friendly environments.

- To enhance the visual appeal and functionality of streets.

Facade Compositions

- To harmonize new facade compositions with existing architectural elements.

- To maintain the aesthetic and architectural integrity of the streetscape.

Rhetoric and Function

- To ensure new developments are in keeping with the character and function of the existing area.

- To balance the physical and functional aspects of buildings.

Livability

- To create spaces that are accessible and livable for all users.

- To promote inclusivity and accessibility in new building designs.

Street Furniture

- To enhance the visual appeal and functionality of streets by promoting the use of street furniture.

- To create a sense of place and identity within the streetscape.

Resilience in the Street and Open Space

- To design streets and open spaces that are resilient to natural and other disasters.

- To promote sustainable and adaptive approaches to street and open space design.

Victoria

Old Town Design Guidelines
Design Guidelines (Rooftop Additions)

Topic Areas and Intent

Recommendation

That Council:


3. Consider consultation under Section 475(2)(b) of the *Local Government Act* and direct staff that no referrals of the Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw are necessary to the Capital Regional District Board, Island Health, Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, provincial or federal governments, Township of Esquimalt, District of Saanich and the District of Oak Bay.

4. Consider consultation under Sections 475(1) and 475(2) of the *Local Government Act* and direct staff to undertake consultation with the community including downtown residents, Old Town property owners, local development and business communities and local heritage organizations on the proposed amendments to the Official Community Plan through online consultation concurrent with public review of the proposed Old Town Design Guidelines (2019).