



## Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of May 9, 2019

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**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** May 2, 2019  
**From:** Andrea Hudson, Acting Director, Sustainable Planning and Community Development  
**Subject:** **Heritage Designation Application No. 000184 for 952 Johnson Street and 1400 Vancouver Street (McCall's Floral Chapel)**

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### RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve the designation of the property located at 952 Johnson Street and 1400 Vancouver 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.

### 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 and the interior roof structure of the property located at 952 Johnson Street and 1400 Vancouver Street, as well as an identification sign with a concrete base and an iron flat-bar structure located on the southeast corner of the property. The building, known as McCall's Funeral Home as well as the Floral Chapel, was built in 1955 and contributes to the historic character of the Harris Green neighbourhood.

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 April 9, 2019 meeting, and the Panel recommended that Council consider approving the designation of the property located at 952 Johnson Street and 1400 Vancouver Street.

### BACKGROUND

#### Description of Proposal

The property located at 952 Johnson Street and 1400 Vancouver Street, also referred to as McCall's Floral Chapel, is a West Coast Modern style building designed by architect John Di

Castri. The chapel was built in 1955 with a gently sloping roof and angular wall geometry, and is located on the corner of Johnson and Vancouver Streets in the Harris Green neighbourhood. An addition in 1961 extended the footprint of the chapel on the west side for administration space. The significance of the historic building is limited to the footprint of the original chapel.

The original chapel has maintained much of its original appearance. Its character-defining elements include its modernist design in form and scale with complex, geometrical and angular massing; low-sloped, canted and folded roof planes with large overhanging eaves; projecting canopy over the front entry with angled buttresses; construction materials, including concrete block wall assemblies in a splayed saw-tooth profile punctuated with linear glazing; smooth stucco surfaces; projecting foyer with intersecting angled concrete buttress walls; and exposed interior glulam roof beams with metal tie rod supports, clerestory glazing and an interior projecting canopy over the entrance to the chapel area. The property also contains a metal and concrete sign stand located on the southeast corner of the property that is also considered to have heritage value and is included as a character-defining element. The property is also valued for its association with John Di Castri, one of Victoria's most well-known architects, who played an influential role in establishing modern architecture in Victoria during the early postwar years; and for its prominent location as a landmark on the corner of Johnson and Vancouver Streets in the Harris Green neighbourhood. The proximity to downtown and churches in the area made this a convenient central location for a funeral home.

### **Regulatory Considerations**

The proposed heritage designation is consistent with surrounding land uses.

### **Condition/Economic Viability**

The exterior and interior of the building appear to be in good condition. The designation is concurrent with a rezoning application and a development permit application for the development of a mixed-use residential building with commercial at grade and residential above at a height of approximately sixteen storeys. The McCall's Funeral Home chapel is proposed to be retained for future commercial use with minimal exterior alteration and integrated into the proposed development through landscaping, circulation, and a one-storey fully glazed lobby with a wood and glass canopy to echo the existing chapel. Once the chapel is designated, a Heritage Alteration Permit Application will be required to undertake any alterations to the exterior, the interior roof structure, as well as the identification sign with a concrete base and an iron flat-bar structure. A draft Heritage Conservation Plan has been completed by the applicant's heritage consultant and could inform the Heritage Alteration Permit Application upon submission.

## **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 application was reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Panel at its April 9, 2019 meeting and was recommended for approval.

## Resource Impacts

The designation of a heritage property has the potential to generate a small number of additional Heritage Alteration Permit Applications spread out over many years if the operator were to make alterations to the interior or exterior. No major resource impacts beyond this are expected.

## CONCLUSIONS

This Application for the heritage designation of the property located at 952 Johnson Street and 1400 Vancouver Street as a Municipal Heritage Site is for a building that is significant for its landmark status in the Harris Green neighbourhood, and valued for its exemplary illustration of John Di Castri's personal brand of Modernism in Victoria. It is also an exemplary example of an ecclesiastical institution as an architectural cornerstone through its innovative design and intentional expression of the mid-twentieth century. Staff therefore recommend that Council consider approving the Heritage Designation Application for the building located at 952 Johnson Street and 1400 Vancouver Street.

## ALTERNATE MOTION

That Council decline Heritage Designation Application No. 000184 for the property located at 952 Johnson Street and 1400 Vancouver Street.

Respectfully submitted,



John O'Reilly  
Heritage Planner  
Development Services Division



Andrea Hudson, Acting Director  
Sustainable Planning and Community  
Development Department

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:



Date: May 3, 2019

## List of Attachments

- Attachment 1 - Subject Map
- Attachment 2 - Aerial Map
- Attachment 3 - Photographs
- Attachment 4 - Statement of Significance
- Attachment 5 - Letter from the applicant, date stamped April 1, 2019.