

## **Address: 902-906 McClure Street**

### **Description of historic place:**

Abigail's Inn is a three-and-one-half storey Edwardian Tudor Revival stucco hotel located in the northwestern quadrant of Victoria's Fairfield neighbourhood.

### **Heritage value:**

The historic place, built in 1930, is valued for its architecture, its architect, what its construction says about social values and female ownership in the 1930s, and how a change in use can preserve a landmark building.

Abigail's Inn has heritage value as an example of a Tudor Revival apartment block. This style, popular in Canada because of the political and cultural ties to Britain, is characterized by prominent half-timbering, a strong masonry foundation, and tall ornate chimneys. The half-timbering is derived from Elizabethan England where heavy timber structural frames were infilled with masonry panels. Among other hallmarks of the style are jettied elements on the upper storeys projecting over lower levels), tall narrow windows in groups of three or more, and verticality.

Built as a rental property for Mrs. M. Hutchinson, it was originally called the Bessborough, named for Vere Brabazon Ponsonby, ninth Earl of Bessborough, governor general of Canada from 1931-1936. It represented the latest in luxury suites with dining rooms, dens, and fireplaces on a street of similar homes. There is value in the design by Percy Fox. Born in England, he came to Canada in 1911. He worked briefly in Thomas Hooper's office, then went into private practice. He worked in partnership with Ralph Berrill but returned to a sole practice in 1921. He designed in several styles including Craftsman, Tudor Revival, and English cottage.

The conversion of the building 1985 to a bed and breakfast establishment in 1985 is a good example in the City of adaptive re-use.

### **Character-defining elements:**

The heritage character of Abigail's Hotel is defined by the following elements:

- characteristics of the Tudor Revival style including stucco, half-timbering, double hung windows with upper portion latticed, some casement windows in upper storeys, steep gable roof with two gabled dormers in front, stone arched entranceway with balcony above, some corbelling under roof and balcony, tall chimneys
- monumentality
- mature landscaping and recent additions
- light fixtures in main entrance
- stone wall in front of property
- siting on a hill