

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF HERITAGE GRANTS ON DEMOLITIONS:
EXAMPLES FROM MOUNT ST. ANGELA AND OLD TOWN**

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December 6, 2019

- **Mount St. Angela**, a notable heritage site is facing the possibility of partial demolition. The part being demolished had conservation work done from a Provincial conservation grant.
- **Old Town** where 10-year -tax-exemption grants are common, along with project grants, is also facing a possible demolition.
- **Conservation grants** of any kind are worth far more than their cost, since the measures prevent future losses.
- ***The Local Government Act*** provides a process for recovery of tax exemptions. "If eligible heritage property is destroyed or damaged whether with or without authorization," recovery may be the original sum plus compound interest each year. (810.1 (a) + (b) + (c).)
- **The LGA** is silent about grants, however, they should not be ignored. Since designated sites receive heritage grants, the underlying assumption is retention, the preferred solution.
- **Public investment**, whether giving what the city has collected or not collected, brings an inherent fiduciary accountability.
- **Cultural and fiscal obligations** come with a grant..
- **Ignoring grants** incentivizes demolitions. This would open the floodgates into Old Town. for the city's large financial losses.

See attached Background.

MOUNT ST. ANGELA BACKGROUND

History

Mt. St. Angela began with 1865 Anglican girls school, by first Victoria architect John Wright.

In 1991-92 the provincial "Landmark Program" grants toward a Building Needs Study, a Maximum Grant and Conservation Needs. The total was \$75,000 (\$110,958 in 1917 currency), part of the \$120,000 spent at the time. The papers were archived at the Heritage Branch and are hard to find. I asked recently if there were any conditions with the grant.

There was general care work, stabilization for the whole and, individual parts, specifically, the old tower, the 1912 cedar roof of the side porch and the 1912 porte cochere in front. Three additions (1876-1912) were all joined together to the front; all parts were designated.

The Proposals

Starting in 2006, a succession of proposals, followed one accepted in 1911 (not built). At that time, the back hotel, which is large and long, was to be removed and lost designation through the Revitalization Agreement Plan and Heritage Alteration Permit.

The present plan would remove what had been worked on: the conservation work, the side porch and the porte cochere.

Past Attempts

Since 2009, I have been explaining to city officials about the grant and the problem inherent in removing, for private profit, what had been sustained by public money. Could this be considered a conflict of interest? I requested in letters, Mayor's Drop Ins, and meetings the need to acknowledge and deal with the grant before the [final] hearing. I've heard no real acknowledgement.

Various officials at City Hall (Mayor, Councillors, planners) say a version of "Bring it up at the hearing." That is too late. Since removals are key to the whole plan, that plan is responsible for public loss

RECCOMENDATIONS

Could Council:

- 1) Acknowledge existence of the grant; 2) respect the many constituents who value heritage; 3) view Old Town as a large carbon sink; and 4) assist tourism, an important source of city income, by keeping Old Town at least somewhat authentic.
2. Vote to discuss with city lawyer, heritage planner, and head planner what to do.
3. Consider if the city owes to the province, the original grant source, to deal with the issue.

.CCs: This information is to be sent to municipal departments, three provincial ministries, organizations and individuals having interest in or dealing with heritage.