

5.3 Proposed Additions to the Heritage Registry – Downtown Examples of the Modern Movement

Committee received a report dated May 15, 2008 from Community Planning with respect to Proposed Additions to the Heritage Registry – Downtown Examples of the Modern Movement. The purpose of this report is to:

1. Provide City Council with information on the heritage significance of the Modern Movement in Victoria's urban development from 1945 to 1975;
2. Report on the results of the consultation process with affected property owners and the public for the proposal to add eleven properties representing Modern Movement architecture in Downtown Victoria to the *Heritage Registry* and to conclude the process.

The City of Victoria Heritage Program has traditionally concentrated on the preservation of historic properties from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The City of Victoria *Heritage Registry* currently identifies over 200 downtown buildings of heritage significance dating back from the earliest history of Victoria in the 1860s up to the 1930s. As time evolves, the City needs to evaluate and conserve buildings from the more recent past. There has been no research or identification of heritage resources from the post-war period of 1945-1975. Architecture from this period is often described as the "Modern Movement", growing out of the international style founded in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s by architects such as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe. There are a number of examples of Modern Movement architecture in Victoria which have architectural, historical and social significance. Preliminary research has been done on the downtown but a broader survey of modern architecture throughout the City will need to be done in the future.

Committee of the Whole considered a staff report on this issue on October 5, 2006 and adopted a motion to consider eleven properties representing the Modern Movement in Downtown Victoria for addition to the *Heritage Registry* and to undertake a consultation process with the affected owners and the public. Individual meetings were held with a number of affected property owners and with interested groups from the real estate and development industry. The majority of affected owners are opposed to this action. A public open house held on March 26, 2008 attracted 63 participants and indicated a significant level of public support for the principle of expanding the Heritage Registry to include examples from the post-war period, particularly buildings of the Modern Movement. This report reviews four issues:

1. Implications of Heritage Registry listing.
2. Senior government properties.
3. Potential impact on property values.
4. Legitimacy of post-war heritage.

The report concludes that preserving Modern Movement examples is consistent with both national and international precedents in Heritage policy.

A Committee member inquired as to the significance of these proposed additions to the heritage registry in context to how other major cities might view them. Staff advised that the focus of this report is what is of significance to Victoria. The City adapted to Modernism through its own, local circumstances. A Committee member noted that there is not a large collection of these buildings, but the value of each one is extraordinary.

Staff noted a correction to the report with respect to the 1515 Blanshard Street building. The provincial government is not opposed to the proposed heritage registry of this building; however, they are not legally bound by municipal regulations.

The City Manager advised Committee that the fourth recommendation creates a procedural issue and therefore should be deferred. Council has the option of making a decision at the non-statutory public hearing or Council can request a report from staff after the non-statutory public hearing to aid their decision-making.

The following properties are to be considered for addition to the Heritage Registry:

- 637 Bay Street — Bay Street Hydro Substation
- 1018 Blanshard Street — City Brokerage Building
- 1515 Blanshard Street—B.C. Electric Company Building
- 1609 Blanshard Street—CNIB Building
- #1 Centennial Square — City Hall Annex
- 912 Douglas Street— Ballantyne's Florist Building
- 1060-80 Douglas Street — Bentall Building
- 1501 Douglas Street— Royal Bank Building
- 1230 Government Street— Main Post Office and Federal Building
- 630 Yates Street — Bank of Toronto Building
- 780 Yates Street — Odeon Theatre Building

Action: Councillor Thornton-Joe moved that City Council:

1. Receive this report for information.
2. Endorse the principle of expanding the scope of the Heritage program to recognize significant historic resources of the post-war era and the Modern Movement of Architecture.
3. Endorse the principle of recognizing the heritage significance of the Modern Movement in Victoria as described in the Statement of Significance by Don Luxton & Associates, July 2006.
4. Schedule non-statutory public hearing to consider the addition of the properties listed in this report to the *Heritage Registry* and to allow affected property owners and other interested stakeholders an opportunity to address Council.

CARRIED 08/320

REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

2. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – May 15, 2008

2. Proposed Additions to the Heritage Registry – Downtown Examples of the Modern Movement

It was moved by Councillor Coleman, seconded by Councillor Madoff, that City Council:

1. Receive this report for information.
2. Endorse the principle of expanding the scope of the Heritage program to recognize significant historic resources of the post-war era and the Modern Movement of Architecture.
3. Endorse the principle of recognizing the heritage significance of the Modern Movement in Victoria as described in the Statement of Significance by Don Luxton & Associates, July 2006.
4. Schedule a non-statutory public hearing to consider the addition of the properties listed in this report to the *Heritage Registry* and to allow affected property owners and other interested stakeholders an opportunity to address Council.

Carried