SHEAM & LOW BUILDING
543-545 ½ FISGARD ST

LEE MONG KOW BUILDING
539-541 ½ FISGARD ST

SING LEE BUILDING
16-20 FAN TAN ALLEY

VICTORIA'S CHINATOWN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, VICTORIA, BC

DRAFT HERITAGE CONSERVATION PLAN

JULY 2020

ATTACHMENT E

DONALD LUXTON
AND ASSOCIATES INC

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DONALD LUXTON AND ASSOCIATES INC

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1 INTRODUCTION

HISTORIC NAME: Sheam & Low Building
CIVIC ADDRESS: 543-545½ Fisgard Street
ORIGINAL OWNERS: Sheam Tip and Low Yan San
ARCHITECT: Fisher & Wilson
BUILDER: George Moore
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION: 1888

HISTORIC NAME: Lee Mong Kow Building
CIVIC ADDRESS: 539-541½ Fisgard Street
ORIGINAL OWNER: Lee Mong Kow
ARCHITECT: Thomas Hooper
BUILDER: George Snider
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION: 1901-1902

HISTORIC NAME: Sing Lee Building
CIVIC ADDRESS: 16-20 Fan Tan Alley
ORIGINAL OWNER: Marie Boucherat
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION: 1913

View of the Sheam & Low Building (centre) and the Lee Mong Kow Building (right) in the 1960s.
[City of Victoria Archives M03884]

The Sheam & Low Building (543-45 1/2 Fisgard Street), the Lee Mong Kow Building (539-41 1/2 Fisgard Street), and the Sing Lee Building (16-20 Fan Tan Alley) are three municipally designated buildings within ***Victoria's Chinatown National Historic Site of Canada***. They are invaluable built heritage resources that contribute to the historic character and urban pattern of the oldest and most intact Chinatown in Canada.

The three conjoined buildings on this site reflect the successive boom and bust cycles that defined Victoria's Gateway economy. The 1888 Sheam & Low Building was built at a time when the economy was racing ahead due to burgeoning resource industries and railway connections, when the city's population, including the Chinese, was increasing rapidly. The 1901-02 Lee Mong Kow Building is an early addition that filled in the remainder of the lot. It resulted from both the civic campaign to remove early wooden 'shacks' that were considered an unsanitary fire hazard, as well as the economy that was rising from the doldrums of the 1890s. The final section of the complex, the Sing Lee Building that fronts onto Fan Tan Alley, represents the ongoing development of infill buildings in the middle of the Chinatown blocks, plus the end of the Edwardian-era boom that had already peaked.

A redevelopment scheme is now proposed for the site, which includes the three component heritage buildings. The overall conservation scheme for the site has been prepared by Waymark Architecture Incorporated, and includes the following proposed interventions:

- preservation of the heritage buildings in their current form;
- assessment and rehabilitation of masonry as required;
- assessment and repair of architectural metalwork (cornice) on north façade;
- assessment and rehabilitation of existing wood windows; and
- restoration colour scheme.

This Conservation Plan provides a documentation of the area's historic context, a summary of the preliminary condition assessment of the exterior character-defining elements based on the limited visual review conducted by DLA in July 2020, and a list of conservation recommendations for the exterior heritage components. This report is based on Parks Canada's *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. It outlines the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation that will occur as part of the proposed redevelopment.

2 HISTORIC CONTEXT

2.1 RESOURCE ERA BOOM (1880S)

There was intense rivalry between Vancouver Island and the Mainland for the terminus of the Pacific Railway, but the Federal Government selected a route through the Fraser Valley. To temper discontent, Ottawa transferred the land title for one-fifth of the Island, control of coal fields on its east coast, and $750,000 to entrepreneur Robert Dunsmuir to build a rail line between Esquimalt and Nanaimo, which was finished in 1888. The arrival of the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway sparked a construction boom in Victoria of stores and hotels around its terminus at the western edge of what is now Pandora Avenue. The block with Pandora Avenue on the north and Johnson Street on the south was then part of the Johnson Street Ravine, a swamp that marked the boundary between a commercial core with colonial businesses to the south, and Chinatown to the north. The Ravine was soon filled in, and new buildings were constructed, now incorporated into Market Square.

The slow pace of immigration in the 1870s became a flood in the 1880s after large numbers arrived from Europe, mostly England and Scotland. The population in Britain had been increasing as better sanitation and medical care resulted in a lower rate of child mortality, but a severe agricultural depression in the second half of the 19th century drove people to seek a new life in the colonies. Between 1870 and the turn of the 20th century, 700,000 British farmers and farm workers emigrated. For adventurous individuals, the British Empire offered opportunities for social mobility and achievement. Some British émigrés asked for a ticket to travel as far as they could go, which brought a number of them to Victoria on the CPR marine ferry.

A significant amount of immigration, however, was not from Europe. There was a dramatic increase in the local Chinese population in the mid-1880s. Chinese citizens, who had been brought to Canada to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway, moved to Victoria and Vancouver after its completion. Also, Chinese merchants from San Francisco played a pivotal role in the inception and development of Victoria's Chinatown. Beginning in 1858, Chinese business people had opened stores, with financial support from San Francisco, located in wooden shacks north of the Johnson Street Ravine. Between the 1880s and the 1910s, a second wave of Chinese merchants arrived from California, consisting of groups of individuals or clans who pooled their resources to purchase land for small businesses set up in new commercial blocks that replaced the earlier informal buildings.

Detail of an oblique aerial lithograph of Victoria from 1878 showing the development of the downtown area. (Library of Congress G3514.V5A3 1878 .G6)

Victoria's Chinatown is expressive of a duality in architecture and urban form that have shaped its evolution as a cultural landscape. On each block, street façades link together to form a wall that shields interior spaces and narrow alleyways between and through buildings, connecting to central courtyards where tenements, opium dens and gambling spots were hidden from the public domain and street view. This spatial configuration served the purpose of literally providing space for the Chinese community to follow religious, kinship and other socio-cultural practices behind frontages with British and American styles that were symbolic of assimilation to Western culture. Chinese society was supported by a number of clan societies and associations. The most prominent was the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, whose building (554-562 Fisgard Street, John Teague, 1885) continues its historical function. Chinatown remains the oldest and most intact such district in Canada, and was designated as a National Historic District in 1995.

The flow of capital that drove the rapid growth of frontier communities was very different than the banking and investment system of today. The earliest settlers arrived before financial institutions were established. The speculative real estate market was fast paced, with little regulation, and foreign investment – mostly British – was highly profitable despite considerable risk. During this period of expansion in the British Empire, there was a general sense of optimistic entrepreneurialism, fuelled by seemingly unlimited land and natural resources in the New World. The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and linkages from the West Coast to global trading partners in the United States, Europe and the Pacific Rim seemed to offer an unending source of wealth.

In wealthy industrial Britain, a new middle class of investors had emerged who were interested in business opportunities overseas. Thomas Dixon Galpin was a member of the new class who began investing in British Columbia land through the

Rear view of residences occupied by Chinese residents which back onto a portion of the Johnson Street Ravine (now Market Square) in the 1886. Looking north, these dwellings would have fronted onto the 500-block of Pandora Avenue.
(British Columbia Archives D-04747)

local firm of Allsop & Mason, which managed his transactions. Over time Dixon Galpin founded the British Columbia Land & Investment Agency, Ltd., with headquarters in London, England, and offices in Victoria, Vancouver and Nanaimo. Through this agency and its affiliate, the Canadian Pacific Land & Mortgage Company, British capital was used to back mortgages, to buy and lease land and to finance new rental property. For example, John Teague designed the Reynolds Block (1300-1306 Douglas Street, 1889) for this company. The flow of capital into Victoria's real estate market was a fairly steady stream that continued until the economic collapse that occurred just prior to the First World War.

Despite economic uncertainty in the early 1890s, the decade was characterized by a profound optimism that Western expansion had no limits. Development throughout the City was made possible through the construction of a new electric streetcar system built by the National Electric Tramway & Lighting Co., which originally served the downtown core but later expanded to encourage the growth of surrounding neighbourhoods. In one year, between 1891 and 1892, the number of architects listed in the Williams B.C. Directory almost doubled, from 26 to 46, with almost half located in Victoria. Great deposits of minerals were found around Boundary and the Kootenays, and there was enormous interest in BC timber after it was displayed at the Chicago World Fair in 1893.

At the beginning of the 1890s, the economy was stable and experienced steady growth until June 1892, when a smallpox epidemic broke out in Victoria and quarantine regulations shut down port activity. The epidemic had impacts on every aspect of life for residents and visitors. One hotel began serving a set menu to lower the chances of infection by decreasing the number of employees. To contain the disease, the Federal Department of Public Works constructed a quarantine station at William Head, immediately outside Victoria.

By the time that construction began on the new Legislature buildings in 1893, there were serious signs of economic recession. The value of gold was suffering a severe global decline, and western currencies,

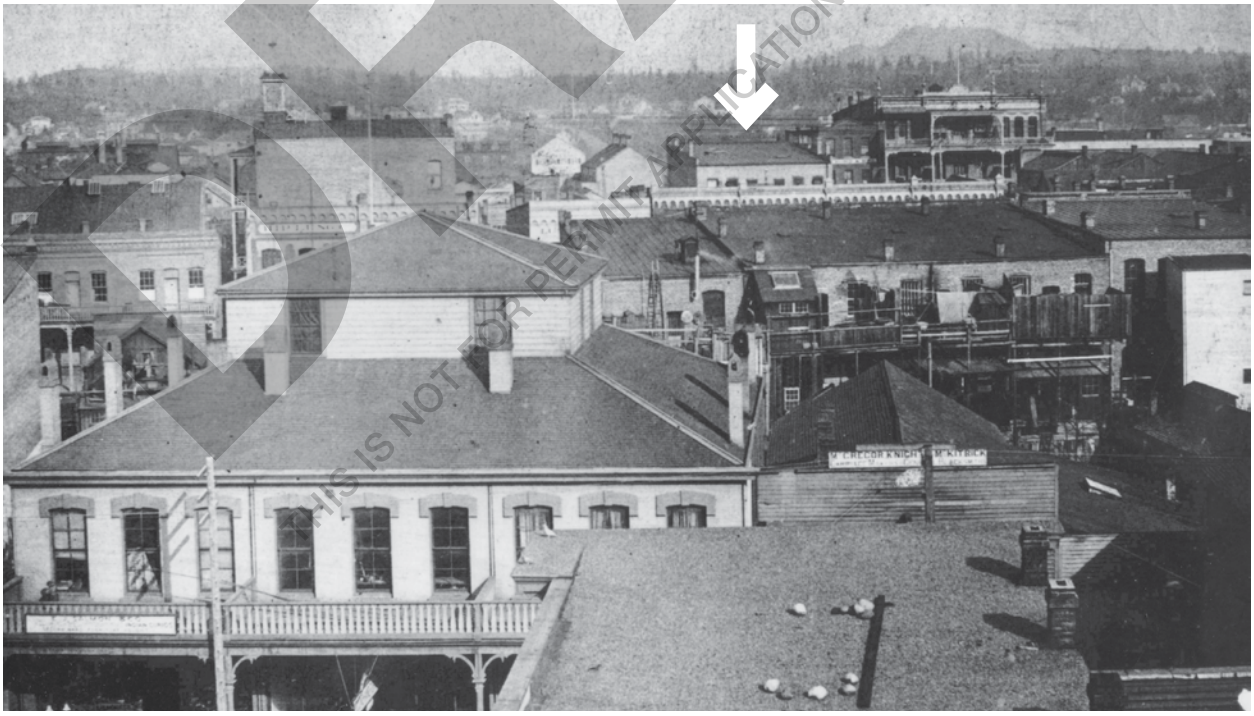
Views of the north side of the 500-block of Fisgard Street in 1886 (top) and 1898 (bottom).
(Top: Library and Archives Canada PA-053605; Bottom: City of Vancouver Archives Str P351.1)

based on the gold standard, were in trouble. By the end of 1893, a banking crisis had taken hold in the United States. A surplus of silver on the global market had the effect of devaluing gold to the point where there was speculation that it may no longer support the circulation of money. Capital flow from the United States to Canada dried up, and investor confidence disappeared. The boom in British Columbia was suddenly bust. The real estate market then collapsed in Victoria, and property foreclosures were widespread. One of the few bright spots in Victoria's economy at this time was the sealing industry, which remained a major local employer.

By the mid-1890s, British investment in British Columbia began to resurface as a catalyst for another round of economic growth. The Kootenay mining boom started in the mid-1890s, and British investors were a major source of financing for this renewed activity. British Columbia's economy was bolstered by a sharp rise in the international price of silver in 1895, rekindling interest in the rich mines of the Kootenays where a number of claims had been staked, but not exploited, in the 1880s. The steeply rising prices triggered frantic development, unleashing a wave of settlement throughout the area.

In 1896, large quantities of gold were discovered on Bonanza Creek in the Yukon, and two steamers arrived in Alaska the next summer with "tons of Klondike gold." The Klondike Gold Rush was fuelled by wildly exaggerated and misleading stories in newspapers around the world about the fantastic potential for wealth. The truth was much less glamorous, but this did not prevent an estimated 100,000 people from travelling to this remote part of the world to seek their fortune. Dawson City became an instant boom town, and was briefly the largest settlement west of Winnipeg and north of San Francisco.

The Klondike boom ended as swiftly as it began. Most of the men who went north lost everything because all the best claims had been staked earlier.



Looking north from the 500-block of Johnson Street into Chinatown in c.1890. The Sheam & Low Building is indicated. (British Columbia Archives D-04747)

At the same time, destabilizing events on the world stage again caused turmoil in BC. In 1899, the South African War broke out, invoking a wave of patriotism that swept the British Empire. Many able-bodied men, without work at the end of the Klondike boom, volunteered to fight overseas. By the turn of the century, most sectors of BC economy were in free-fall. The province was close to bankruptcy and a lack of confidence was pervasive in the air. This was just a brief interlude that set the stage for the greatest boom of all.

2.2 EDWARDIAN ERA BOOM (1901-1913)

An economic boom of enormous scale ushered in the 20th century. While the construction of the Panama Canal had renewed interest in Pacific trade, the progress of this huge project was very slow. Between 1881 and 1894, French interests attempted to keep the project underway, but failed to understand the difficulties of the terrain and climate, and were ultimately defeated by the prevalence of malaria. In 1903, the United States secured Panama, and construction began the following year on a decade-long project, the largest construction project in the world. Popular momentum was gained when President Teddy Roosevelt travelled to Panama in 1906 to visit the "Big Ditch." Lending his personal stature to the Canal boosted investor confidence and was a catalyst for the last and greatest western boom.

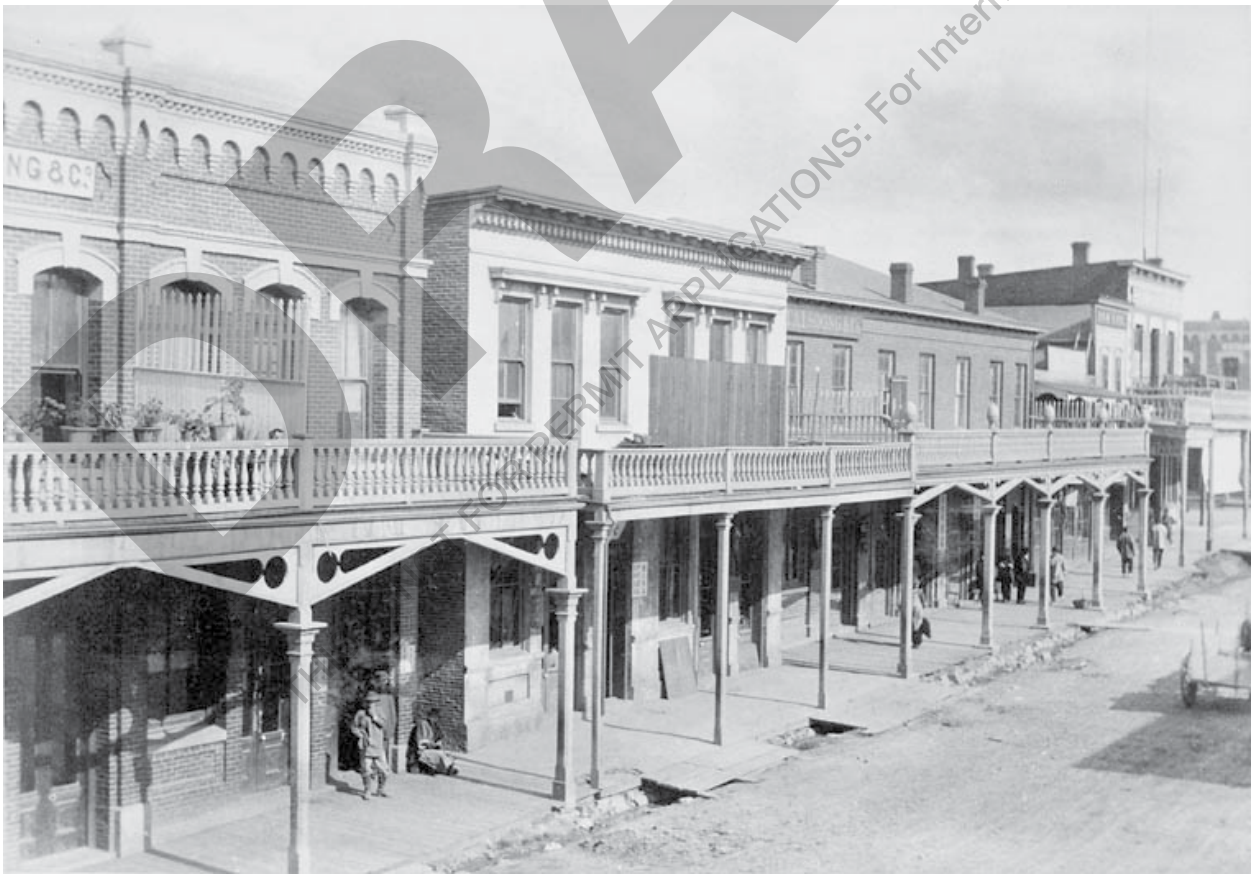
Detail of postcard looking west along Fisgard Street in c.1902. The Sheam & Low and the Lee Mong Kow Buildings, indicated, are visible midblock. (City of Victoria Archives M05582)

In 1903, at the age of thirty-two, Richard McBride became the first BC premier born in BC, and was the youngest in the British Empire to hold such a high position. The 1900s was an era of significant nationalist expansion, speculative development and a population explosion. The Grand Trunk Pacific announced plans to extend its railway to the West Coast in 1903, and acquired Kaien Island about 20 miles south of Port Simpson. The decision to make Prince Rupert the terminus triggered high demand for northern timber licenses. A sea of immigrants began to migrate westwards across the country by railway and steamship and one outcome was major growth in the coastal cities. Victorians believed their city was destined for greatness when the Canadian Pacific Railway purchased the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway.

However, another unforeseen economic downturn in 1907 began with a banking crisis in the United States. In British Columbia, unemployment was widespread, which heightened racial tensions as both the public and the provincial government considered the large numbers of Chinese, Japanese and South Asian immigrants seeking work in BC to be "invading orientalism." The Province of British Columbia attempted to pass a Natal Act that would have excluded these groups from employment, but Lieutenant-Governor James Dunsmuir, an employer of Asian labour, refused to sign the discriminatory law.

By 1908 the local economy was again improving. Like the rest of BC, Victoria's economic future was closely tied to the construction of railroads. By this time, the Great Northern Railway had reached Vancouver, and in 1909 the province was electrified by the announcement that a third transcontinental railway line, the Canadian Northern, would be built to the coast with a proposed terminus at the new city of Port Mann. In Victoria, new railways were planned to complement the existing E&N Railway. As a city that was challenged by its isolation and geography, Victoria's railways were critical to the movement of people and goods, strengthening the local and regional economy, and expanding the developed land base.

By 1909, some of the largest industrial plants in the world, including sawmills, canneries, and mines, were built in British Columbia to capitalize on the natural resources of the Pacific Northwest. Victoria continued to flourish as a port city, and overall confidence in the economy lead to inflated land values for lots throughout Victoria At the height of the boom, the most expensive land parcels were located on lower Douglas Street. Despite the market conditions, the City acquired the land of the Songhees Reserve in 1912, after the Songhees First Nations relocated to Esquimalt. In addition, the local government invested in the Rock Bay Bridge connecting Bridge and Constance Streets, which ensured that Rock Bay, the industrial heart of the Burnside Gorge neighbourhood, continued to boom. Lastly, in 1913, the Federal Government built the Ogden Point Docks, which enabled large ships to transport both settlers, and visitors.



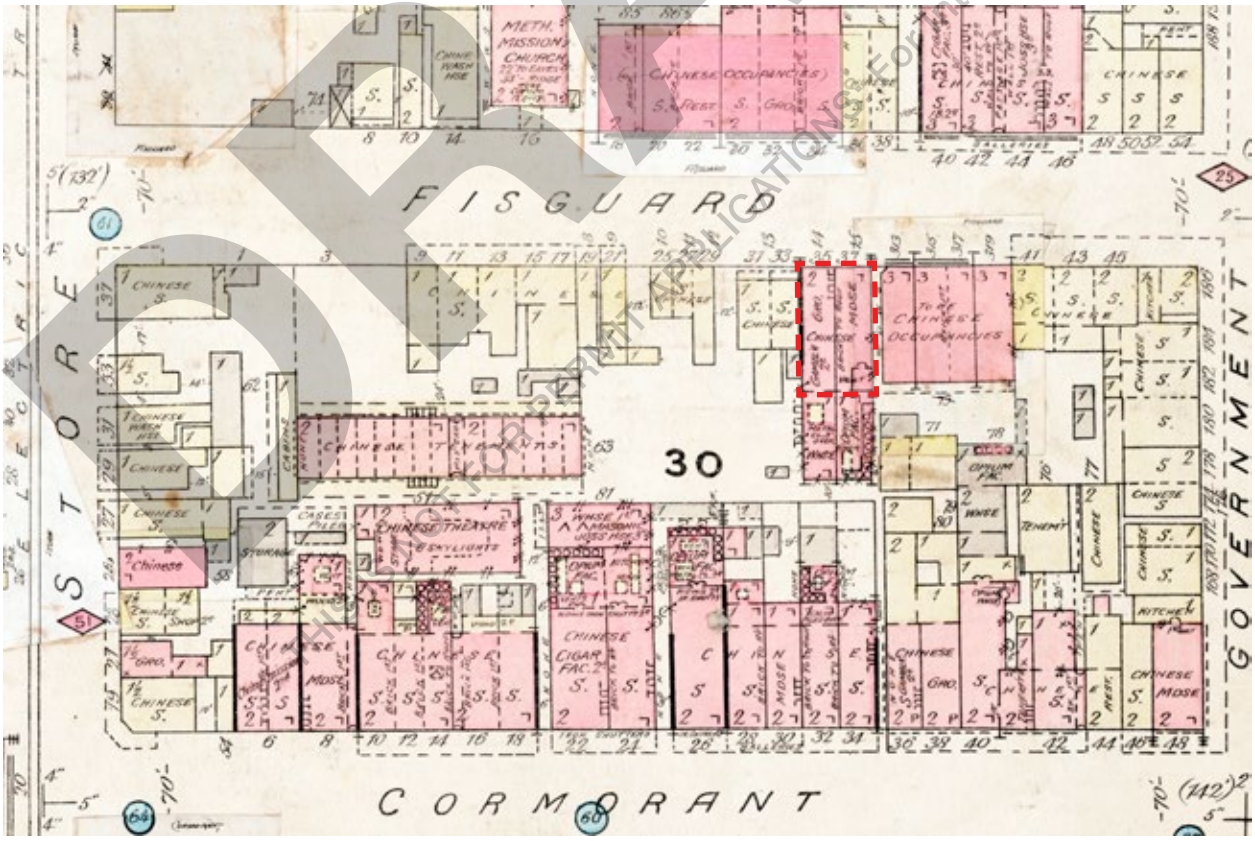
Chinese-operated mixed use buildings on the north side of the 500-block of Pandora Avenue in 1886. The southern entrance to Fan Tan Alley is visible, centre-left. (Library and Archives Canada C-023413)

2.3 CHINATOWN: THE FORBIDDEN CITY

A significant number of Chinese migrants arrived in the 1850s and 1860s as part of the gold rush, and many remained as labourers, miners, farmers, shop owners and merchants. Thousands of Chinese also immigrated in the 1880s as workers on the construction of the transcontinental railway. After the railway was completed through the Rockies in 1885, many Chinese arrived in Victoria, establishing shops and laundries, and working in domestic service.

Escaping political and social turmoil in China in the 1850s, thousands of Hakka Chinese migrants from a small region in the southern province of Guangdong arrived at the gold rush frontier in California, setting up a permanent presence in San Francisco. In 1858, the Fraser Gold Rush triggered the movement of many Chinese from California to British Columbia. On June 24, 1858, Hop Kee & Co. of San Francisco commissioned Allan Lowe & Co. of the same city to transport 300 Chinese men and 50 tons of merchandise to Victoria at the cost of $3,500. Victoria was their main point of entry until the early 20th century.

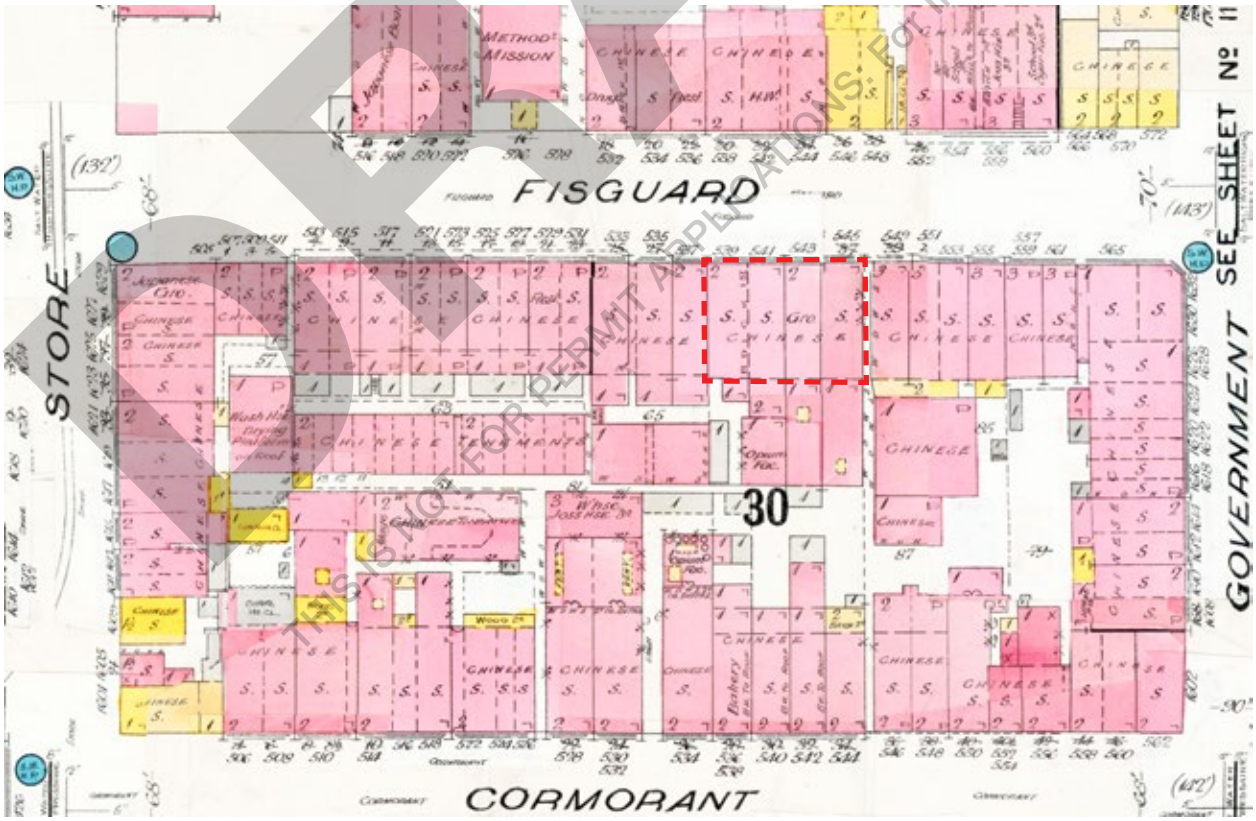
Prior to the construction of the transcontinental railway, Chinese groups were present, having migrated to the Cariboo goldfields, taking on some of the more menial service tasks such as housekeeping and laundry, and also plying the opium trade. But it was the immigration of thousands of Chinese as workers on the construction of the transcontinental railway in the 1880s that eventually had a profound effect on British Columbia's cultural landscape. Contrary to common belief, the CPR



1891 (revised 1895) fire insurance plan of Victoria showing the block bound by Fisgard, Store, Government, and Cormorant (now Pandora Avenue) Streets. The Sheam & Low Building, indicated, originally had a 1-storey warehouse and opium factory at its rear. This extension would eventually be replaced with the extant Sing Lee Building. (University of Victoria)

did not contract Chinese labourers to build the railway; they were brought to British Columbia by contractors who built the line for the Canadian Government, which then turned it over to the CPR when completed. In 1880, Andrew Onderdonk, an American who was one of the main CPR contractors in British Columbia, enlisted Chinese labourers from California. When most of them deserted for the goldfields, Onderdonk and his agents then signed several contractual agreements in China's Guangdong province, in Taiwan and with Chinese companies in Victoria to send more workers to Canada. Ultimately, some 17,000 men came from China to western Canada to build the railway. With the completion of the mountain section of the CPR in 1885, a considerable number of single Chinese men drifted into different areas, looking for work. Family clan and benevolent societies sprang up in Victoria's Chinatown, to provide social support and general welfare services to their members otherwise not available due to discriminatory policies and practices at the time; these associations became a key aspect that continues to define Chinatown to this day.

Responding to anti-immigration sentiment in British Columbia, in July 1885 the federal government stipulated that all Chinese entering Canada must first pay a $50 fee, later referred to as a head tax; the fee increased to a maximum of $500 in 1904. The tax system had the effect of constraining Chinese immigration; it also discouraged Chinese women and children from joining their men, so the Chinese community remained a largely 'bachelor society.' This did not meet the goal of excluding Chinese immigration altogether, but perpetuated discriminatory policies that would ebb and flow with economic conditions.



1903 (revised 1905) fire insurance plan of Victoria showing both the Sheam & Low Building (right half) and the Lee Mong Kow Building (left half). Note the number of wood-frame buildings, coloured yellow, replaced since the 1891/1895 fire insurance plan on the opposite page. (University of Victoria)

By the late 1880s Chinatown was an established community. As the Chinese population continued to grow, so did Chinatown, and wooden buildings were replaced with brick blocks, and an interior network of alleys and passageways grew more complicated as tenements and businesses were added behind the facades that were visible from the street. A distinct building typology emerged in Chinatown, which displayed a mix of traditional Chinese motifs grafted onto utilitarian buildings. Generally designed by Western architects, they were typical of other commercial buildings of the time, but featured exotic embellishments such as recessed upper floor balconies, mezzanines that were lighted by clerestory windows – which were not taxable as part of the total square footage of the building and became known as 'cheater floors' – and projecting eave canopies with upturned ends. Street façades were linked together, forming a wall that shielded interior spaces and narrow alleyways between and through buildings that were linked to central courtyards – the hidden location of tenements, opium dens, theatres and gambling houses. This configuration allowed the Chinese community to adhere to traditional religion, kinship and economic practices while projecting the image of assimilation to Western society. As Chinatown grew, the mid-block courtyards behind many buildings were infilled with tenement buildings, which also housed grocery shops, tailors, restaurants and other businesses. The exterior evidence of its Chinese ownership and use was sometimes indicated by multiple doorways to the upper floor, which indicated the presence of tenements and meeting

Storefront of the east commercial bay of the Sheam & Low Building (originally 37 Fisgard Street, now 545 Fisgard Street) as it appeared in 1900. (British Columbia Archives C-06728)

rooms for volunteer association on the upper floors. A number of these early buildings remain as a distinctive part of the cultural urban landscape of Chinatown.

As the downtown core continued to develop, many older structures were deemed as unsanitary or unsafe fire traps by the civic authorities, leading to periodic clean-up campaigns that often followed on the heels of one of the city's frequent fires. Upon the recommendation of their health and building inspectors, the City would condemn these buildings. Dozens of "shacks" were demolished, many of them Chinatown tenements. At one point, the authorities ran 'Jumbo,' their heavy street grader, through some of the buildings between Fisgard and Cormorant, then set the debris on fire. The loss of these building provoked almost immediate rebuilding, with new brick buildings that were larger and denser than what was previously on the site. The authorities could claim victory and progress, and the owners just rebuilt and went back into business, keeping architects and contractors very busy in the north end of downtown.

> *Undoubtedly one of the most conspicuous improvements carried on in Victoria during the past ten months was the destruction of the dilapidated shacks which for many years intruded themselves with almost painful irregularity upon the view in different portions of the city. The majority of these were in Chinatown and vicinity, although the activity of the building and sanitary inspectors was not confined here by any means, for many eye-sores in other parts have been removed through their zealous efforts.*
>
> *Until within the last year Chinatown was considered the most objectionable feature of the city. Perhaps it is yet, but the many rows*

View of the Sheam & Low Building (centre) and the Lee Mong Kow Building (right) in 1959. (City of Victoria Archives M01437)

of decaying shacks with their unwholesome appearance, in close proximity to the heart of the town, were enough to mar any claim that might be advanced respecting the immunity of Victoria from eye-sores.

In almost every case, the old relics, and landmarks ordered destroyed have been replaced by substantial brick buildings. This certainly would not have happened had the authorities relaxed their vigilance. The effluxion of time would have compelled the owners to ultimately remove buildings that were in danger of falling to pieces from very antiquity, but this might have been years, were it not for the prompt action that was taken by the city.
"Decadence of Shackdom: Forcible steps taken to Eradicate Eyesores."
***Victoria Daily Times*, Dec. 4, 1900, pg.10**

Already marginalized due to competition for cheap labour, the Chinese were also subject to moral scorn by the dominant Anglo population. The wrath of the morally righteous was incited by lurid newspaper exposés of opium dens (legal until 1909), gambling and brothels, all of which indeed existed in the area. As the economy languished in the years following the end of the First World War, discrimination mounted and there were new public attacks on the Chinese, who were compared to a 'spreading contagion that had to be confined so as not to infect the entire body.' The extent of this discrimination is well documented in publications such as Hilda Howard's 1921 apocalyptic novel, The Writing on the Wall, in which the author, a free-lance journalist writing under the name Hilda Glynn-Ward, imagined a British Columbia where plague spread by the Chinese was killing off all 'whites' while Asians competed for political mastery. At the same time, the Children's Protective Association wanted to remove all Chinese students from the city's classrooms because they were said to slow the progress of Caucasian students. The Board of Trade and farmers' groups lobbied for an end to 'Oriental' ownership of land. At the same time, provincial Attorney-General Alex Manson campaigned for the exclusion of 'Asiatics' from the workplace. On July 1, 1923 the Chinese Immigration Act came into effect, ending the head tax but also banning almost all immigration of Chinese people into Canada, although with certain exemptions for business people, clergy, educators, students, and a few other categories.

Attitudes shifted dramatically after the end of the Second World War. The federal government relaxed immigration policies, and in 1947 removed the ban on Chinese immigrants, opening the doors to increased numbers of new Chinese Canadians. As discrimination tapered off, Chinese moved to other areas of the city, and became more visible outside of Chinatown. Racist policies and societal views persisted for many years, however the Chinese community was a crucial force in the city's early economy, served Canada in the wars, and enriched the city through cultural celebrations. Despite this conflicted early history, the Chinese community made deep, long-standing and ongoing contributions to the evolving city.

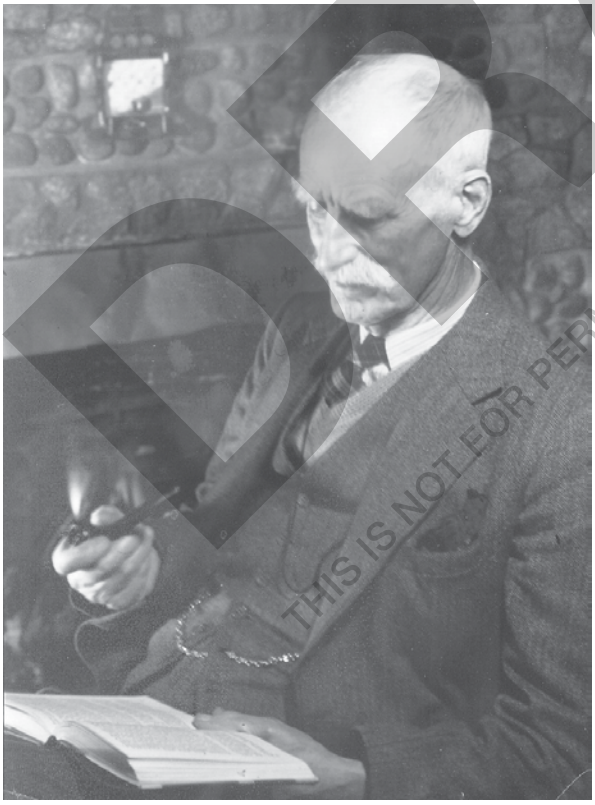
2.4 SHEAM & LOW BUILDING 543-545½ FISGARD STREET

Sheam Tip and Low Yan San owned this property from June 1887, and built the section of the building now addressed as 543-545 ½ Fisgard Street. Most of the property in downtown Victoria was owned the white settlers, and this site was unusual for its Chinese ownership at the time. In 1890 the property was sold to Laurent Guichon, who two months later sold to Jules Boucherat.

Sheam Tip and Low Yan San hired architects Fisher & Wilson, a partnership of Elmer Fisher and William Ridgway-Wilson, to design the building. Typical of the inherent racism of the time, the owners were described as a Chinese firm, or 'Chinamen,' but a more accurate report in the Victoria Daily Colonist, January 1, 1889, listed Shean [sic] Tip and Low Yan San, brick block, stores and dwellings. Fisher & Wilson, architects, George Moore, builder - $5,000.'

Jules Boucherat died in May 1900, and his extensive property holdings, including this site were left to his wife, Marie Boucherat, who owned it for many years. The adjacent property was subdivided and

Elmer H. Fisher, unknown date. (University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections UW12609)



William Ridgway-Wilson, unknown date. (Courtesy of Roz Mellander)

sold to Lee Mong Kow, who built the adjacent building in 1901-02. In the early 1900s, the Shon Yuen Opium factory was established at the rear of the building. This building was leased to the Chinese until August 1949, when it was sold by Anthony C. Coit to George Joe, Chow Shoon Wing, Chu Tait Yen and Joe Wah.

2.4.1 FISHER & WILSON, ARCHITECTS

Revised excerpts from: Luxton, Donald, ed. Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia. Vancouver, BC: Talonbooks, 2007.

Elmer H. Fisher (c.1840 - c.1905)

While Fisher's birth year, birth place, and early education are unknown, between 1874 and 1886, he moved between Minneapolis, Denver, and Butte, Montana. He arrived in Victoria by February 1886 setting up an architectural practice. Keeping his options open, a sensible move given the imminent arrival of the transcontinental railway, Fisher was the only architect to advertise his services in Vancouver newspapers in early 1886.

Fisher rode the crest of the development boom in the West. Vancouver's Great Fire of 1886 provided the opportunity for several commissions in that city. In 1886 he designed a new commercial arcade in Victoria for David Spencer. The following year he was responsible for Wille's Bakery on Victoria's Lower Johnson Street, the Goldstream Hotel for James Phair, and the Pimbury Building in Nanaimo. The striking Bank of B.C. building in New Westminster, 1887, was also a Fisher design, as was Nanaimo's second Court House. Although Fisher rarely undertook residential commissions, he designed a pair of houses for pioneer Victoria druggist A.J. Langley in 1887.

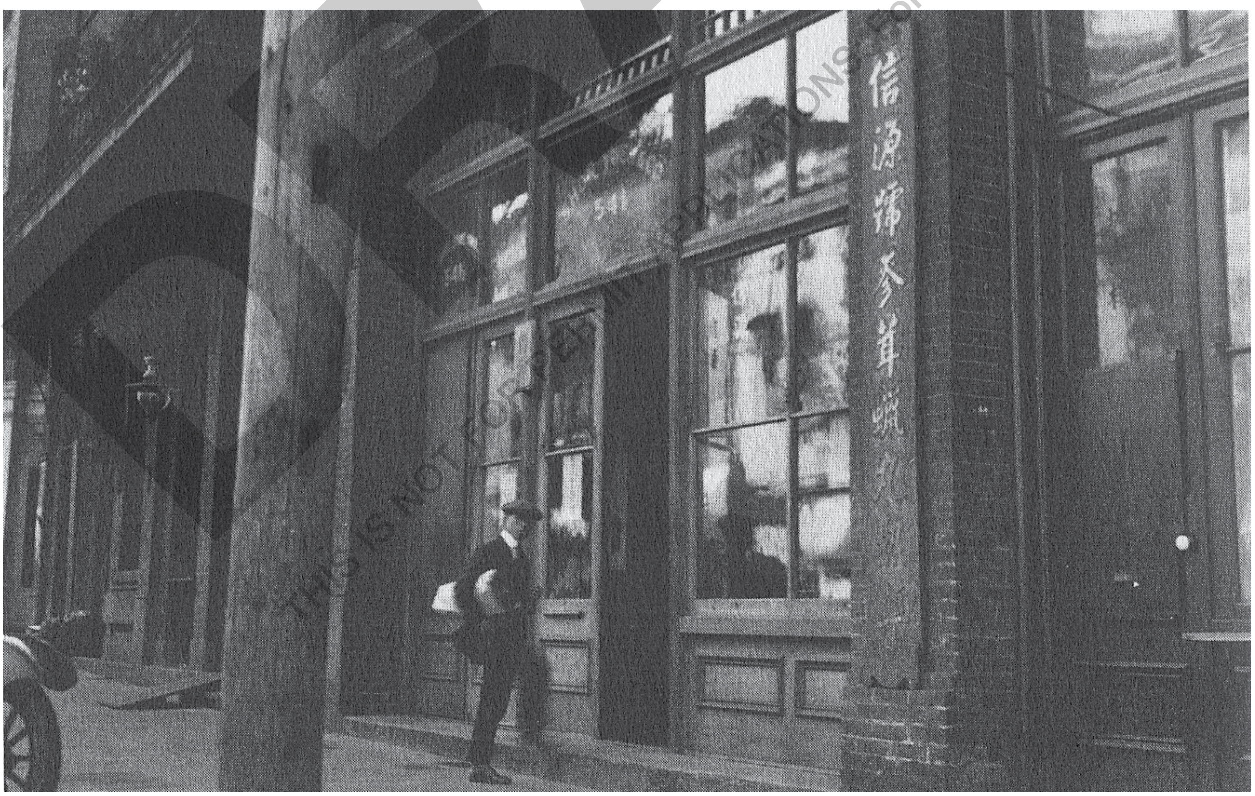
In May 1888 Fisher entered into a year-long partnership with *William Ridgway-Wilson*, a recent arrival in Victoria, and together they designed several prominent structures in Victoria, including the W.G. Cameron Building, and the Craft & Norris Block, both from 1888. This latter building, along with the Byrnes Block and the Bank of B.C., are similar Italianate designs with imposing beveled corner entrances. During his time in B.C., Fisher

was responsible, alone or with Wilson, for at least twenty buildings in its four main cities.

The ever restless Fisher was also travelling further afield to search for larger commissions, and turned his attention to Port Townsend, Washington, which was another anticipated terminal of a transcontinental railway; Fisher designed a number of major structures there. By November 1887 Fisher had also established an office in Seattle, and was the leading architect in the city by the time of the 1889 fire, which levelled thirty square blocks of the city's business core. Once again, his timing was excellent, as he had abandoned his Victoria practice by April of that year.

His Seattle practice was extremely successful. Fisher appears to have exaggerated his achievements in other cities, although none of his clients seemed to care as long as he produced results, which he did. After just two years of work he was able to leave a magnificent legacy of impressive structures in and around Pioneer Square, and he was instrumental in establishing the Romanesque Revival vernacular in the area, exemplified by the robust Pioneer Building of 1889-91.

In the *Victoria Daily Colonist*, May 20, 1890 it was reported that Fisher, "formerly of this city, came over from Seattle via Vancouver on Sunday night, and went out to Shawnigan Lake for the benefit of his health. During the past year Mr. Fisher has had in charge $2,500,000 worth of buildings in Seattle, and the great strain on his mental powers has necessitated a rest." After executing dozens of large commissions, Fisher appears to have lost interest in architecture, and in 1891 abandoned his practice to run the Abbott Hotel in Seattle. He invested heavily in unsuccessful business ventures, and "went bust" in the general economic collapse of 1893.



Storefront of the east commercial bay of the Lee Mong Kow Building, 541 Fisgard Street, as it appeared in the 1920s. (From: Lai, David C. The Forbidden City Within Victoria. Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers, 1991, pg. 148)

By the mid 1890s he left Seattle and moved to Los Angeles. Never again successful in architecture, he ended up working as a carpenter, and as an outside supervisor for architect John Parkinson. Fisher died in obscurity about 1905, but his place of death and burial are, like his birth, unconfirmed.

William Ridgway-Wilson (1862-1957)

Colonel Ridgway-Wilson was a prolific and surprisingly versatile architect. He designed many impressive residences still standing today, and was also responsible for numerous commercial buildings and for several grand military and institutional landmarks. Wilson was born in Hong Gow, China on July 24, 1862, and his family moved to England soon after. He began serving articles in the office of Bromiton Cheers, a Liverpool architect, as early as age thirteen, and later moved to London to work as assistant in the offices of architects, Searles & Hayes, and also with Sir Horace Jones, London City Architect. During his time in London he passed examinations at the South Kensington Science and Art school, which allowed him to lecture on building construction, and to pursue studies at the Royal Academy.

At the end of 1887, Wilson arrived in Victoria and set up his practice. In May 1888 he entered into a short-lived but productive partnership with the experienced and well-travelled frontier architect, Elmer H. Fisher, and they completed buildings in Victoria and Vancouver between 1888-89 before Fisher left for Seattle. In 1889, Wilson was hired by John Mahrer to design the Nanaimo Opera House, a three-storey, brick-faced Italianate structure that seated up to 600 persons. The same year he designed the Queen Anne-style residence for banker Alexander A. Green, named *Gyppeswyk*, the Saxon name for Green's birthplace, Ipswich. In 1890-91, Wilson had a short-lived partnership with T.C. Sorby, and they provided the designs for the

View of the Sheam & Low Building (centre) and the Lee Mong Kow Building (right) in the 1960s. (City of Victoria Archives M03884)

Begbie Block in New Westminster, 1890-91, and a commercial block for the five daughters of Sir James Douglas, which became known as the Five Sisters Block.

From 1892, Wilson operated as a sole practitioner, and his career took off with numerous grand houses, commercial blocks, and large institutional projects to his credit. His early institutional projects included Victoria's South Park School, 1894, inspired by the contemporary school architecture of London. Wilson also undertook the isolation hospital at Royal Jubilee, 1893, and alterations and additions to the Provincial Asylum in New Westminster in 1897-98. Victoria West School, 1907-08, and additions to Lampson Street School, Esquimalt, 1913, followed later in Wilson's career.

Commercial projects of interest included his Italianate designs for Chinese clients in Victoria's "Chinatown," such as the Loo Tai Cho Building, 1893. Wilson, in addition to being the architect for the B.C. Land & Investment Agency from 1894 on, designed many buildings like the two-storey Porter Block, 1897, and Mahon Block, 1907, in Victoria.

Wilson joined the militia in 1899, and two of his last major commissions were related to his military contacts. He provided plans for both the Victoria Drill Hall, now the Bay Street Armoury, Victoria, 1913-15, and the Colquitz Jail, on Wilkinson Road in Saanich, 1914. Wilson achieved the rank of Colonel, and during the First World War was in charge of the internment of enemy aliens on the west coast. At first, the aliens were kept in the Saanich prison that Wilson himself designed, and later they were moved to an Internment Camp in Vernon, of which Wilson became the commander.

After the outbreak of war in 1914, Wilson went into partnership with Alexander Robert Hennell, an association that lasted until 1918. Hennell carried on the architectural business while Wilson went into the army full-time. By the 1920s Wilson was approaching retirement age and took on smaller projects, although he did not officially retire until 1940.

He died on February 21, 1957 at the age of ninety-four, and was interred in the family plot in Colwood Burial Park. His funeral was held in St. John the Divine Church, which he had designed forty-five years earlier.

2.5 LEE MONG KOW BUILDING, 539-541½ FISGARD STREET

539–541 Fisgard Street was built in the style of a "shop-house" for businessman Lee Mong Kow in 1901, basically as an addition on the western end of 541–545 Fisgard Street built in 1888 for two other businessmen, Sheam Tip and Low Yan San. Typical of shop-houses, the street level was used as retail space and the upper floors were apartments. This type of building form and use was in keeping with contemporary shop-houses found in Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong. Later, some of Lee Mong Kow's storefronts were used as offices or meeting rooms; some of the upper floors were used as club rooms and offices.
John Adams, "541½ Fisgard Street: History of Occupants and Use."

The property owned by Jules Boucherat was subdivided, and this building was constructed to complement the appearance of the existing Sheam & Low Building. Architect Thomas Hooper copied certain features of the existing structure, even though they were stylistically out of date at the time, such as the segmental arched window openings. Lee Mong Kow developed the building, was a partner in Shon Yuen (one of the ground floor businesses in the block) and lived with his family on the second floor from 1902 to 1908.

Lee Mong Kow is the head of a company which is building a new two-storey brick structure on Fisgard street. The building will have a frontage of 60 feet and a depth of 60 feet. The stories will be 17 feet high. In the rear another structure will be built, to be used in connection with the main building. It will be 50 feet by 40 feet and will give the entire place a depth of 110 feet. The total cost will

be about $7,000. Part of the brick work for one store has been done, and if the weather remains favorable, the building will be finished in a couple of weeks. George Snider has the contract and Thomas Hooper is the architect.
"New Block." ***Victoria Daily Colonist*****, Dec. 3, 1901, pg.6**

Although their upper floors were designed as an integrated unit, the storefront treatments on the two Fisgard Street buildings are completely different. The 1888 Sheam & Low storefront was more closed and solid, while the 1901-02 Lee Mong Kow storefront was fully glazed, similar to a design used in other buildings by Hooper.

The Lee clan was undoubtedly the most influential power block in terms of wealth and constituted a large proportion of the elite class in Chinatown, as shown by its strong representation on the first few boards of directors of Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. Lee Mong Kow, a Panyu native, spoke English well. During his childhood in Hong Kong, he had lived with his mother in an English family where she worked as a maid. He went to San Francisco in 1881 and moved north to Victoria in the following year. He worked as a labourer in Esquimalt for three years. Because of his ability in speaking and writing English, he was employed in 1885 by Canada Customs and Immigration as an interpreter. At the same time, he entered into a partnership with Sewn Yuen, a Chinese Herbal store. Later he managed Tai Soong & Co. when Tong Him Tai (alias Tong Kee) retired, and became a prominent merchant in Chinatown. Lee Mong Kow also acted as the Manager of Fook Yuen & Co. His wife was the daughter of prominent businessman Chang Toy, generally known as Sam Kee (San Ji),

Lee Mong Kow's family in Victoria, pre-1905. Left to Right: Mrs. Lee Mong Kow (Seto Chang Ann), son Lee Yook Lum (Arthur), Mrs. Lee Yook Quan (Lee Mong Kow's mother), son Lee Yook Quan (Alfred), Mr. Lee Mong Kow, daughter Lee Yut Wah (Ida). (British Columbia Archives A-02348)

born May 16, 1857 in Cheong Pan village, Panyu county, Guangdong province (People's Republic of China). Married twice, Chang Toy had at least six sons and two daughters, and died in 1921.

Lee Mong Kow was also one of the founders of the first Chinese free school in Victoria. As an interpreter he became an important liaison official between the Chinese community and the government. In recognition of his contributions, the Manchu government conferred him the Imperial-Awarded First Class Sub-Prefect of the First Rank of the Privilege of Wearing Peacock Feather in 1897. In 1915, the government of the Republic of China conferred him Gar Wo Medal of the Sixth Rank. 36 He retired to Hong Kong in 1921, and was killed in 1924 in an automobile accident.

From 1915 to 1935, the upper floors of 539-541 Fisgard were occupied by the Shake Shake Hand Club, typical of the many private clubs in Chinatown, mainly for gambling and/or smoking opium. Police raids were frequently described in detail in newspaper accounts, especially in the early 1920s. Though 541½ Fisgard Street was definitely a club, no mention of it has been found in any of the police reports, whereas other neighbouring addresses on Fisgard Street and Fan Tan Alley were mentioned frequently. This suggests that the Shake Shake Hand Club was more of an elite social club than a gambling club and that the members were well connected. The Shake Shake Hand Club featured in the sensational murder of Tang Hualong, a former Chinese cabinet minister, that occurred in September 1918. Tang was a constitutional reformer at the end of the Qing dynasty and was one of the founders of the Republic of China after the 1911 Xinhai Revolution. In June 1918 he passed through Victoria to start a tour of North America, possibly to borrow money for the cash-strapped Beijing-based government. At the end of August he returned to Victoria to stay a few before returning home. After dinner on the evening of September 1, Tang and his entourage went to the Chinese Club upstairs at 541½ Fisgard Street. Afterwards they had been invited to the home of Lee Mong Kow. When they passed the northern end of Fan Tan Alley, Wong Chong, a local barber, jumped out of the alley brandishing two revolvers and shot and killed Tang. With police in pursuit and confronted by several firemen, Wong Chong put a gun to his own head and killed himself at the corner of Pandora Avenue and Broad Street.

2.5.1 THOMAS HOOPER, ARCHITECT

Revised excerpt from: Luxton, Donald. Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia. Vancouver, BC: Talonbooks, 2007.

Born in Hatherleigh, Devon, England on March 2, 1857, Thomas Hooper (1857-1935) was the sixth of eleven children of John and Susan Hooper. John Hooper brought his wife and children to London, Ontario in 1871, and after Thomas completed his schooling he was apprenticed for four years as a carpenter and joiner. The opening of the west tempted the Hooper family to move to the boomtown of Emerson, Manitoba in 1878. When it became clear that the railway was going to pass through Winnipeg rather than Emerson, Thomas moved there, and worked as a contractor; later he engaged in architectural work with older brother, Samuel, who in addition to his private architectural practice and work as a sculptor, became, in 1907, the first Provincial Architect of Manitoba.

Thomas Hooper decided to push farther west, and arrived in Vancouver in July, 1886, having walked the last 500 miles to the west coast. His timing was fortuitous, as he arrived in Vancouver just one month after the great fire that had destroyed the burgeoning new community. Hooper worked as Provincial Supervisory Architect from 1887-88, and also established his own practice in 1887. His first projects in Vancouver included several houses, a Chinese Mission church, a commercial block for R.V. Winch, and his largest early commission in Vancouver, the Homer Street Methodist Church, 1888-89. This was the first of many commissions that he received from the Methodists. As a result of these connections, Hooper was chosen to design the Wallace Street Methodist Church in Nanaimo,

and the Metropolitan Methodist Church in Victoria, and in 1889 was sent back east by the church elders to tour the new trends in church architecture, where he was exposed to the Romanesque Revival style popularized by H.H. Richardson.

Hooper shifted the focus of his activities to the more established city of Victoria. Always looking to expand his practice, in 1890 Hooper established a partnership in Victoria with S.M. Goddard. Although the firm was dissolved in June the following year, together they designed several prominent buildings, including the Wilson & Dalby Block in Victoria, and an Indian Mission School in Port Simpson. In 1891 Hooper also started a short-lived association with a Mr. Reid in Nanaimo, a partnership that produced only one known building, a shopping arcade for David Spencer. In 1893, Hooper won the competition for the Protestant Orphans' Home in Victoria.

Thomas Hooper, unknown date.
(Courtesy of Margaret Bambrick)

Hooper's career suffered during the general depression of the mid-1890s, but flourished again starting with the boom years of the Klondike Gold Rush. He acquired a reputation as a solid and astute businessman who understood the needs of commercial clients, and his office turned out numerous handsome, and sometimes innovative, structures. The front facade of his warehouse for Thomas Earle, Victoria, 1899-1900, is one of the earliest local examples of a glass curtain wall, demonstrating Hooper's awareness of developing trends in architecture in Eastern Canada and the United States.

By 1902 he formed a partnership with C. Elwood Watkins, who had entered his office as an apprentice in 1890. Among the many projects that the firm undertook at this time were the successful competition entry for the Victoria Public Library, 1904; the campus for University Schools Ltd. in Saanich, 1908; additions to St. Ann's Academy in Victoria, designed 1908; and many projects in Vancouver including the Odd Fellows Hall, 1905-06; the B.C. Permanent Loan Co. Building, 1907; and the landmark Winch Building, 1906-09.

After the partnership with Watkins ended acrimoniously in 1909, Hooper concentrated on large-scale commercial and institutional projects, advertising himself as a specialist in steel-framed structures. This was the most prolific period of Hooper's career; his work ranged from the magnificent residence *Hycroft*, 1909-12, for A.D. McRae – the most imposing mansion in the CPR's new suburb of Shaughnessy Heights in Vancouver – to court houses, churches, and numerous warehouses and commercial buildings throughout the province. Other significant projects during the boom years included a tobacco shop for E.A. Morris in Victoria, 1909; the classically-inspired Chilliwack City Hall, 1910-12; the Vancouver Labor Temple, 1910-12; additions to the Vancouver Court House, 1910-12; the Vernon Court House, 1911-14; the Revelstoke Court House, 1911-13; ice arenas for the Patrick Brothers in Vancouver and Victoria, 1911-12; the Tudor Revival mansion *Lyndhurst*, for P.R. Brown in Esquimalt, 1913; and a number of B.C. commissions for the Royal Bank.

The general economic downturn of 1913 caught the booming province by surprise. After an unsuccessful attempt to establish an office in Edmonton, and a failed entry to the Vancouver Civic Centre competition in 1914, Hooper, seeing no future in British Columbia, left in 1915 to try his luck in New York City. He formed a partnership, and was beginning to establish his reputation, when America's entry into the Great War in 1917 choked off any further commissions, and his career was effectively ended. He remained in New York but finally ran through his money and returned penniless to Vancouver in 1927. With the assistance of his family he tried to reestablish his practice. He formed a brief partnership with Robert Wilson, who had previously been his office manager, and they are known to have designed one apartment building together in 1928. Hooper also consulted on the design of the Benjamin Franklin Hotel in Seattle, but the Crash of 1929 and the ensuing Depression ended any further attempts to find work. Along with many others he withdrew his membership from the AIBC in 1931, and lived with family members until ill health forced his entry into a nursing home. Hooper died January 1, 1935, and was buried in the family plot of his relatives, the McCauls, in Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver.

2.5 SING LEE BUILDING, 16-20 FAN TAN ALLEY

This structure was built in 1913 by Sing Lee, on property owned by Jules Boucherat's widow, Marie. The building permit was issued on July 30, 1913 for a two-storey stores building with four rooms, at an estimated cost of $5,000. The Sing Lee Building is defined by its Fan Tan Alley frontage; by 1920 there were eight contiguous buildings that formed a 240-foot long passage between Fisgard and Cormorants streets that became known as Fan Tan Alley after the gambling clubs located along its length. Each end was closed with a wooden door, but this did not prevent police raids into the clubs.

Detail of a 1947 oblique aerial image showing the roof and portion of the rear elevation of the Sing Lee Building, indicated with arrow. (Vintage Air Photos BO-47-1455)

Entrance to 18½ Fan Tan Alley of the Sing Lee Building in 1977. (City of Vancouver Archives 2008-010.0325)

These morality raids were reported frequently in the newspapers:

> *Police Find All the Stout Doors Broken Down on Former Occasion Replaced*
> *Forty-six Chinese were arrested in a raid on gambling rooms in the oriental club, Fan Tan alley, at 11 o'clock last night, and on being arraigned in police court today they were remanded until Monday morning. These were the same premises that were raided early in December, resulting in the arrest of 147 Chinese, each of whom was fined $10 for the offence… There was a stubborn resistance to the raiders, and the doors had all to be battered down again. When the blows of axes and hammers began to rain upon the first door the yells of the men inside could be plainly heard outside, and some of them tried to escape, but the exits were so closely guarded that not one got away. On the entry of the police there was a scene of pandemonium.*
> **"Oriental Club is Raided Again."**
> ***Victoria Daily Times*, Jan. 21, 1916, pg.9**

There was also a small internal alley at the south end of the site that originally ran to the west through to Theatre Alley.

3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

HISTORIC NAME: Sheam & Low Building
CIVIC ADDRESS: 543-545½ Fisgard Street
ORIGINAL OWNERS: Sheam Tip and Low Yan San
ARCHITECT: Fisher & Wilson
BUILDER: George Moore
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION: 1888

HISTORIC NAME: Lee Mong Kow Building
CIVIC ADDRESS: 539-541½ Fisgard Street
ORIGINAL OWNER: Lee Mong Kow
ARCHITECT: Thomas Hooper
BUILDER: George Snider
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION: 1901-1902

HISTORIC NAME: Sing Lee Building
CIVIC ADDRESS: 16-20 Fan Tan Alley
ORIGINAL OWNER: Marie Boucherat
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION: 1913

This Statement of Significance is revised by Donald Luxton & Associates (July 2020), based on the the materials retrieved from historicplaces.ca. The historic structure is formally recognized in the Canadian Register as the ***Sheam & Lee Building*****.**

Description of the Historic Place

539-545 ½ Fisgard / 16-20 Fan Tan Alley is a two-storey, brick-clad commercial and residential building located on the south side of Fisgard Street in the heart of Victoria's Chinatown National Historic Site, which also extends south and marks the northern entry and a western edge of Fan Tan Alley. The building is comprised of three separate but conjoined structures: The Sheam & Low Building, 543-545 ½ Fisgard Street, built in 1888; the Lee Mong Kow Building, 539-541 ½ Fisgard Street, built in 1901-02; and the Sing Lee Building, 16-20 Fan Tan Alley, built in 1913. The Fisgard Street facades are distinguished by their symmetrical segmental-arched windows and doors on the upper floor, projecting cornices and distinctive storefronts. The side and rear elevations are characterized by less formal construction and demonstrate a typical Chinatown pattern of secondary passageways and courtyards.

Heritage Value of the Historic Place

539-545 ½ Fisgard / 16-20 Fan Tan Alley is valued as part of a grouping of early buildings that contribute to the historic character and urban pattern of Victoria's Chinatown National Historic Site, the oldest and most intact Chinatown in Canada. In the 1850s, exacerbated by political and social turmoil in China, thousands of Chinese migrated from a small region in the southern province of Guangdong to frontier gold rush sites in California, setting up a permanent base in San Francisco. In 1858, the Fraser Gold Rush spurred the growth of Victoria as a significant port town, and prompted the movement of many Chinese into the province. Victoria was the primary point of entry for Chinese into Canada until the early twentieth century. The three conjoined buildings on this site reflect the successive boom and bust cycles that defined Victoria's Gateway economy. The 1888 Sheam & Low Building was built at a time when the economy was racing ahead due to burgeoning resource industries and railway connections, and when the city's population, including the Chinese, was increasing rapidly. The addition to the west, the 1901-02 Lee Mong Kow Building, resulted from both the civic campaign to remove early wooden 'shacks' that were considered an unsanitary fire hazard, and the economy that was rising from the doldrums of the 1890s. The final section of the complex, the Sing Lee Building, represents the ongoing development of infill buildings in the middle of the Chinatown blocks, plus the end of the Edwardian-era boom that had already peaked.

The building is further valued as a representation of the dominant role Chinese merchants played in Victoria's Chinatown. Already established in San Francisco, a number moved to Victoria and purchased lots as early as 1858, opening stores backed by funding from San Francisco headquarters. A second wave of merchants immigrated into Victoria's Chinatown in the 1890s to 1910s. These smaller proprietors consisted of groups of individuals or clans who pooled their resources to purchase land to build their businesses. Sheam Tim and Low Yan San purchased part of Lot 444 and built the first portion of the building in 1888; a structure at the rear of the building housed the Shon Yuen Opium

Factory. The property was sold to Laurent Guichon, in 1890, who sold it to Jules Boucherat the same year. Boucherat died in 1900, leaving the property to his wife, Marie. Lee Mong Kow, a figurehead in Victoria's Chinatown who leased the building, purchased the subdivided western section and built a complementary structure in 1901-02. In 1913, Sing Lee built the Fan Tan alley structure to house two stores, with gambling rooms upstairs.

Victoria's Chinatown is expressive of a duality in architecture and cultural landscape. On each block, street façades link together, forming a wall that shields interior spaces and narrow alleyways between and through buildings linked to central courtyards, which were the hidden location of tenements, opium dens, theatres and gambling houses. This configuration allowed the Chinese community to adhere to traditional religion, kinship and economic practices while projecting an image of assimilation to Western society. 539-545 ½ Fisgard displays a typical western design of the time with its Italianate influences such as segmental-arched windows and pressed metal cornices. Typical Chinatown features include narrow doorways in the front façade that lead to the upper floor and 'cheater' mezzanines. The building also links to the interior of the block via Fan Tan Alley, which in the early 1900s housed gambling and opium dens shielded from the non-Chinese community by heavy wooden doors.

The building is also valued as an example of the architectural partnership of Elmer H. Fisher and William Ridgway-Wilson, who designed the eastern portion of the building in 1888. In 1901, Thomas Hooper (1857-1935), one of the province's most prolific architects, designed the western portion in matching style.

Character-Defining Elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of 539-545 ½ Fisgard / 16-20 Fan Tan Alley include its:

- location on the south side of Fisgard Street, at the northern entry point to Fan Tan Alley, part of a grouping of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century historic masonry buildings in Victoria's Chinatown National Historic Site;
- continuous commercial and residential use;
- siting on the front and side property lines, with no setbacks;
- commercial form, scale and massing, as expressed by its two-storey height, with 'cheater' mezzanines, rectangular plan, flat roof, four storefronts facing Fisgard Street, lower rear structure facing Fan Tan Alley, and passageway at rear leading west from the Alley;
- masonry construction, such as red-brick walls and parged sills;
- Italianate features, such as pressed-metal brackets and cornices, and brick pilasters dividing the front facade into four bays;
- Chinese features, such as: second-storey wood-panelled doors with segmental-arched transoms opening to a projecting iron balcony; narrow doorways leading to upper floors; and additional features on the Fan Tan Alley elevation, including two wooden storefronts, segmental-arched window openings and parged doorway surrounds;
- original two-over-two, four-over-four and six-over-six double-hung wooden-sash windows, set into segmental-arched openings;
- decorative flashed transoms and other original elements in the 1901-02 storefronts; and
- original interior elements such as 'cheater' mezzanines.

4 CONSERVATION GUIDELINES

4.1 GENERAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The primary intent is to preserve the built heritage, while undertaking a rehabilitation that upgrade its structure and services to increase its functionality for contemporary use. As part of the scope of work, all heritage character-defining elements should be preserved and repaired in-kind, while missing or heavily deteriorated elements will be restored to match original based on physical or archival documentation.

Proposed Interventions

The overall conservation scheme for the site has been prepared by Waymark Architecture Incorporated, and includes the following proposed interventions:

- preservation of the heritage buildings in their current form;
- assessment and rehabilitation of masonry as required;
- assessment and repair of architectural metalwork (cornice) on north façade;
- assessment and rehabilitation of existing wood windows; and
- restoration colour scheme.

Interventions to the heritage buildings at at 539-545 ½ / 16-20 Fan Tan Alley should be based upon the Standards outlined in the *Standards & Guidelines*, which are conservation principles of best practice. The following document should be referenced when carrying out any work to an historic property:

- ***Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada***, Parks Canada, 2010.
- ***Building Resilience - Practical Guidelines for the Sustainable Rehabilitation of Existing Buildings in Canada***, MTBA & Associates Inc., 2016.
- ***Technical Preservation Services: Preservation Briefs***, *National Park Service*
- ***Conserving Historic Signs***, New South Wales Heritage Office

New Addition to the Historic Structure

Any proposed interventions to the historic building, particularly all new visible construction, will be considered a modern addition to the historic structure. The *Standards & Guidelines* list recommendations for new additions to historic places.

The proposed design scheme should follow these principles:

- Designing a new addition in a manner that draws a clear distinction between what is historic and what is new.
- Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic place. In either case, it should be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and colour, yet be distinguishable from the historic place.
- The new additions should be physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the preserved historic façade.

An addition should be subordinate to the historic place. This is best understood to mean that the addition must not detract from the historic place or impair its heritage value. Subordination is not a question of size; a small, ill-conceived addition could adversely affect an historic place more than a large, well-designed addition.

Additions or new construction should be visually compatible with, yet distinguishable from, the historic place. To accomplish this, an appropriate balance must be struck between mere imitation of the existing form and pointed contrast, thus complementing the historic place in a manner that respects its heritage value.

4.2 STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The site includes three municipally designated buildings: the Sheam & Low Building (543-45 1/2 Fisgard Street); the Lee Mong Kow Building (539-41 1/2 Fisgard Street); and the Sing Lee Building (16-20 Fan Tan Alley). The three conjoined buildings are significant historical resources located within ***Victoria's Chinatown National Historic Site of Canada*** in Victoria, British Columbia. The Parks Canada's *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* is the source used to assess the appropriate level of conservation and intervention. Under the *Standards & Guidelines*, the work proposed for the Sheam & Low Building, the Lee Mong Kow Building, and the Sing Lee Building includes aspects of preservation, rehabilitation and restoration.

> ***Preservation:*** *the action or process of protecting, maintaining, and/or stabilizing the existing materials, form, and integrity of an historic place or of an individual component, while protecting its heritage value.*
>
> ***Restoration:*** *the action or process of accurately revealing, recovering or representing the state of an historic place or of an individual component, as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value.*
>
> ***Rehabilitation:*** *the action or process of making possible a continuing or compatible contemporary use of an historic place or an individual component, through repair, alterations, and/or additions, while protecting its heritage value.*

Interventions to the heritage buildings should be based upon the Standards outlined in the *Standards & Guidelines*, which are conservation principles of best practice. The following ***General Standards*** should be followed when carrying out any work to an historic property.

Standards & Guidelines:
Conservation Decision Making Process

UNDERSTANDING

- **REFER TO HERITAGE VALUE AND CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS**
  An historic place's heritage value and character-defining elements are identified through formal recognition by an authority or by nomination to the *Canadaian Register of Historic Places*.
- **INVESTIGATE AND DOCUMENT CONDITION AND CHANGES**
  On-site investigation as well as archival and oral history research should be carried out as a basis for a detailed assessment of current conditions and previous maintenance and repair work.

PLANNING

- **MAINTAIN OR SELECT AN APPROPRIATE & SUSTAINABLE USE**
  Find the right fit between the use and the historic place to ensure existing new use will last and provide a stable context for ongoing conservation.
- **IDENTIFY PROJECT REQUIREMENTS**
  Define the needs of existing or future users, and determine the scope and cost of conservation work to establish realistic objective. Define priorities and organize the work in logical phases.
- **DETERMINE THE PRIMARY TREATMENT**
  While any conservation project may involve aspects of more than one of the three conseration treatments, it helps to decide during the planning stage whether the project falls under *Preservation*, *Rehabilitation* or *Restoration*.
- **REVIEW THE STANDARDS**
  The Standards are central to the process of preserving, rahabilitating or restoring an historic place in a consistent manner.
- **FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES**

INTERVENING

- **UNDERTAKE THE PROJECT WORK**
  Familiarize those working on the project with the planned conservation approach and to ensure they understand the scope of the project. Hiring processes for consultants and contractors should identify the need for heritage expertise and experience.
- **CARRY OUT REGULAR MAINTENANCE**
  The best long-term investment in an historic place is adequate and appropriate maintenance. Develop and implement a maintenance plan that includes a schedule for regular inspection to proactively determine the type and frequency of necessary maintenance work.

STANDARDS

Standards relating to all Conservation Projects

1. Conserve the heritage value of an historic place. Do not remove, replace, or substantially alter its intact or repairable character-defining elements. Do not move a part of an historic place if its current location is a character-defining element.
2. Conserve changes to an historic place, which over time, have become character-defining elements in their own right.
3. Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention.
4. Recognize each historic place as a physical record of its time, place and use. Do not create a false sense of historical development by adding elements from other historic places or other properties or by combining features of the same property that never coexisted.
5. Find a use for an historic place that requires minimal or no change to its character defining elements.
6. Protect and, if necessary, stabilize an historic place until any subsequent intervention is undertaken. Protect and preserve archaeological resources in place. Where there is potential for disturbance of archaeological resources, take mitigation measures to limit damage and loss of information.
7. Evaluate the existing condition of character-defining elements to determine the appropriate intervention needed. Use the gentlest means possible for any intervention. Respect heritage value when undertaking an intervention.
8. Maintain character-defining elements on an ongoing basis. Repair character-defining elements by reinforcing the materials using recognized conservation methods. Replace in kind any extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements, where there are surviving prototypes.
9. Make any intervention needed to preserve character-defining elements physically and visually compatible with the historic place and identifiable upon close inspection. Document any intervention for future reference.

Additional Standards relating to Rehabilitation

10. Repair rather than replace character-defining elements. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair, and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements. Where there is insufficient physical evidence, make the form, material and detailing of the new elements compatible with the character of the historic place.
11. Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to an historic place and any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.
12. Create any new additions or related new construction so that the essential form and integrity of an historic place will not be impaired if the new work is removed in the future.

Additional Standards relating to Restoration

13. Repair rather than replace character-defining elements from the restoration period. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements.
14. Replace missing features from the restoration period with new features whose forms, materials and detailing are based on sufficient physical, documentary and/or oral evidence.

4.3 TECHNICAL PRESERVATION BRIEFS

The following additional conservation resources may also be referred to, as necessary: **National Park Service, *Technical Preservation Services. Preservation Briefs*:**

Preservation Brief 1: Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings.
Preservation Brief 2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings.
Preservation Brief 3: Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings.
Preservation Brief 6: Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings.
Preservation Brief 9: The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows.
Preservation Brief 10: Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork.
Preservation Brief 11: Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts.
Preservation Brief 17: Architectural Character – Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character.
Preservation Brief 18: Rehabilitating Interiors in Historic Buildings – Identifying Character-Defining Elements.
Preservation Brief 21: Repairing Historic Flat Plaster – Walls and Ceilings.
Preservation Brief 22: The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco.
Preservation Brief 23: Preserving Historic Ornamental Plaster.
Preservation Brief 24: Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended Approaches.
Preservation Brief 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs.
Preservation Brief 28: Painting Historic Interiors.
Preservation Brief 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible.
Preservation Brief 33: The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stained and Leaded Glass.
Preservation Brief 34: Applied Decoration for Historic Interiors: Preserving Historic Composition Ornament.
Preservation Brief 35: Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation.
Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes.
Preservation Brief 38: Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry.
Preservation Brief 39: Holding the Line: Controlling Unwanted Moisture in Historic Buildings.
Preservation Brief 41: The Seismic Retrofit of Historic Buildings: Keeping Preservation in the Forefront.
Preservation Brief 43: The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports.
Preservation Brief 47: Maintaining the Exterior of Small and Medium Size Historic Buildings.

4.4 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Heritage conservation and sustainable development can go hand in hand with the mutual effort of all stakeholders. In a practical context, the conservation and re-use of historic and existing structures contributes to environmental sustainability by reducing solid waste disposal, saving embodied energy, and conserving historic materials that are often less consumptive of energy than many new replacement materials.

In 2016, the Federal Provincial Territorial Ministers of Culture & Heritage in Canada (FPTMCHC) published a document entitled, *Building Resilience: Practical Guidelines for the Retrofit and Rehabilitation of Buildings in Canada* that is "intended to establish a common pan-Canadian 'how-to' approach for practitioners, professionals, building owners, and operators alike."

The following is an excerpt from the introduction of the document:

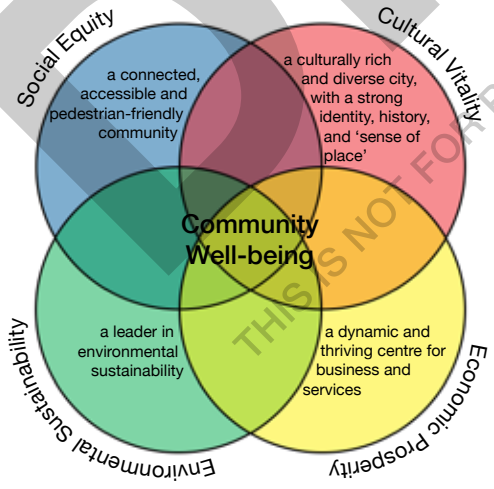
> *[**Building Resilience**] is intended to serve as a "sustainable building toolkit" that will enhance understanding of the environmental benefits of heritage conservation and of the strong*

*interrelationship between natural and built heritage conservation. Intended as a useful set of best practices, the guidelines in **Building Resilience** can be applied to existing and traditionally constructed buildings as well as formally recognized heritage places.*

These guidelines are primarily aimed at assisting designers, owners, and builders in providing existing buildings with increased levels of sustainability while protecting character-defining elements and, thus, their heritage value. The guidelines are also intended for a broader audience of architects, building developers, owners, custodians and managers, contractors, crafts and trades people, energy advisers and sustainability specialists, engineers, heritage professionals, and officials responsible for built heritage and the existing built environment at all jurisdictional levels.

***Building Resilience** is not meant to provide case-specific advice. It is intended to provide guidance with some measure of flexibility, acknowledging the difficulty of evaluating the impact of every scenario and the realities of projects where buildings may contain inherently sustainable elements but limited or no heritage value. All interventions must be evaluated based on their unique context, on a case-by-case basis, by experts equipped with the necessary knowledge and experience to ensure a balanced consideration of heritage value and sustainable rehabilitation measures.*

***Building Resilience** can be read as a stand-alone document, but it may also further illustrate and build on the sustainability considerations in the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.*



Four Pillars of Sustainability [CityPlan 2030 - City of Norwood Payneham & St. Peters]

4.5 ALTERNATE COMPLIANCE

As municipally designated buildings within ***Victoria's Chinatown National Historic Site of Canada***, the Sheam & Low Building, the Lee Mong Kow Building, and the Sing Lee Building may be eligible for heritage variances that will enable a higher degree of heritage conservation and retention of original material, including considerations available under the following municipal legislation.

4.5.1 BRITISH COLUMBIA BUILDING CODE

Building Code upgrading ensures life safety and long-term protection for historic resources. It is important to consider heritage buildings on a case-by-case basis, as the blanket application of Code requirements do not recognize the individual requirements and inherent strengths of each building. Over the past few years, a number of equivalencies have been developed and adopted in the British Columbia Building Code that enable more sensitive and appropriate heritage building upgrades. For example, the use of sprinklers in a heritage structure helps to satisfy fire separation and exiting requirements. Table A-1.1.1.1., found in Appendix A of the Code, outlines the "Alternative Compliance Methods for Heritage Buildings."

Given that Code compliance is such a significant factor in the conservation of heritage buildings, the most important consideration is to provide viable economic methods of achieving building upgrades. In addition to the equivalencies offered under the current Code, the City can also accept the report of a Building Code Engineer as to acceptable levels of code performance.

4.5.2 ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACT

The provincial Energy Efficiency Act (Energy Efficiency Standards Regulation) was amended in 2009 to exempt buildings protected through heritage designation or listed on a community heritage register from compliance with the regulations. Energy Efficiency standards therefore do not apply to windows, glazing products, door slabs or products installed in heritage buildings. This means that exemptions can be allowed to energy upgrading measures that would destroy heritage character-defining elements such as original windows and doors.

These provisions do not preclude that heritage buildings must be made more energy efficient, but they do allow a more sensitive approach of alternate compliance to individual situations and a higher degree of retained integrity. Increased energy performance can be provided through non-intrusive methods of alternate compliance, such as improved insulation and mechanical systems. Please refer to the *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* for further detail about "Energy Efficiency Considerations."

4.6 SITE PROTECTION & STABILIZATION

It is the responsibility of the owner to ensure the heritage resource is protected from damage at all times. At any time that the building is left vacant, it should be secured against unauthorized access or damage through the use of appropriate fencing and security measures. Additional measures to be taken include:

- Are smoke and fire detectors in working order?
- Are wall openings boarded up and exterior doors securely fastened once the building is vacant?
- Have the following been removed from the interior: trash, hazardous materials such as inflammable liquids, poisons, and paints and canned goods that could freeze and burst?

The masonry façades should be protected from movement and other damage at all times during demolition, excavation and construction work. Install monitoring devices to document and assess cracks and possible settlement of the masonry façade.

5 CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

A condition review of the Sheam & Low Building (543-45 1/2 Fisgard Street), the Lee Mong Kow Building (539-41 1/2 Fisgard Street), and the Sing Lee Building (16-20 Fan Tan Alley) was carried out during a site visit in July 2020. In addition to the visual review of the exterior of the building, some paint samples were taken from exterior building materials and examined. The recommendations for the conservation of the heritage buildings are based on the site review, material samples and archival documents that provide valuable information about the original appearance of the historic structures.

The following chapter describes the materials, physical condition and recommended conservation strategy for the Sheam & Low Building (543-45 1/2 Fisgard Street), the Lee Mong Kow Building (539-41 1/2 Fisgard Street), and the Sing Lee Building (16-20 Fan Tan Alley) based on Parks Canada *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

5.1 SITE

The three component buildings are located within Victoria's Chinatown National Historic Site of Canada. The exterior brick masonry walls were originally built to the front (north) and side (east) property lines with no setbacks. Over time, the structure behind the building addressed at 539-41 1/2 Fisgard Street has been demolished. The existing work proposed to the site will retain all the buildings in their existing location.

Conservation Strategy: Preservation

- All heritage elements within the site should be protected from any damage or destruction at all times. Reference ***Section 4.6: Site Protection & Stabilization*** for further information.
- Preserve the original location of the three component buildings.
- Retain the main frontage along Fisgard Street and Fan Tan Alley.

Aerial view showing location of the heritage buildings within Victoria's Chinatown National Historic Site of Canada.

539-545 Fisgard Street, July 2020.

539-545 Fisgard Street, between 1959 and 1974. [City of Victoria Archives M03884]

Exposed masonry of 16-20 Fan Tan Alley, left; exposed side wall of 543-545 Fisgard Street, right.

5.2 FORM, SCALE & MASSING

The work proposed to the site will retain the existing form, scale and massing of the component buildings, while allowing for repair and functional upgrades as required.

Conservation Strategy: Preservation & Rehabilitation

- Preserve the existing overall form, scale and massing of the three component buildings.
- Undertake rehabilitation measures as required for functional upgrades.

5.3 EXTERIOR MASONRY WALLS

The three buildings retains their original masonry construction, including parged arched window hoods. The brick on the Fisgard Street facades is painted, while the rear walls, and side wall facing Fan Tan Alley are unpainted. The Fan Tan Alley facade of the Sing Lee building is unpainted, while the side and rear walls have been parged with a later stucco.

Conservation Strategy: Preservation & Rehabilitation

- Undertake complete condition survey of condition of all exterior masonry walls by a Professional Engineer, including, but not limited to: masonry units and mortar joints; window sills and arched hoods; an d, other painted masonry surfaces.
- Preserve the brick whenever possible, and replace in kind brickwork that is too deteriorated for safe use.
- Cleaning, repair and repointing specifications should be reviewed by Heritage Consultant.
- Overall cleaning of the brick on the exterior front façade and rear elevation should be carried out. Sandblasting or any other abrasive cleaning method that may damage the fireskin surfaces is not permitted. Only approved chemical restoration cleaners may be used.
- All redundant metal inserts and services mounted on the exterior walls should be removed or reconfigured.

Exposed ground floor sill of 543-545 Fisgard Street facing Fan Tan Alley, showing delamination of parging.

Damaged paint surface of storefront column at 543 Fisgard Street. The brick was originally unpainted. Note peeling down to early paint layers; the earliest application appears to be a red lead hydrophobic coating.

Granite Curbs, 543 Fisgard Street.

Close-up view of sheet metal cornice, showing detachment from wall surface at east end.

Upper floor replaced windows and doors of 543-545 ½ Fisgard Street.

Upper floor original windows of 539-541 ½ Fisgard Street.

- Any holes in the brick should be filled or replaced to match existing.
- Determine whether or not it is feasible to remove the paint and expose the original brick. Undertake test samples for paint removal in an inconspicuous area using only approved restoration products. If paint removal is determined to be feasible, prepare removal specification. If not, prepare to repaint.
- Repointing should only be undertaken by skilled masons. Repoint mortar joints with new mortar that matches existing in consistency, composition, strength, colour and pointing profile; note the finely tooled profile of the original mortar joints.

5.4 ARCHITECTURAL METALWORK

The original sheet metal cornice of 543-545 ½ Fisgard Street still exists, with detailed brackets at the column tops, and a rolled running profile between. When 539-541 ½ Fisgard Street was constructed, the appearance and profile of the cornice was mated to create a unified appearance between the two buildings. The cornices are intact, but are demonstrating some signs of detachment from the wall surfaces.

A projecting cornice appears to have existed on the Fan Tan façade of the Sing Lee Building, which has been completely removed. No documentary evidence is known to exist that shows its original profile, but it is assumed to have been a typical Edwardian-era sheet metal cornice.

A projecting balcony with its original brackets still exists on the front façade of 543-545 1/1 Fisgard Street. This balcony once extended across the front of 539-541 ½ Fisgard Street, but was replaced in 1955 with a projecting second floor fire escape in the centre of the front façade.

Conservation Strategy: Rehabilitation

- Evaluate the overall condition of the cornices, as well as existing metal balconies and fire egress stairs, to determine whether more than protection, maintenance and limited repair or replacement in kind is required.
- Consider restoration of an appropriate Edwardian-era cornice to the Fan Tan Alley façade of the Sing Lee Building.
- The visual appearance of the cornices should not be altered and should match the historic appearance.

5.5 FENESTRATION

Windows, doors and storefronts are among the most conspicuous feature of any building. In addition to their function — providing light, views, fresh air and access to the building — their arrangement and design is fundamental to the building's appearance and heritage value. Each element of fenestration is, in itself, a complex assembly whose function and operation must be considered as part of its conservation.
– Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

5.5.1 WOOD WINDOWS & DOORS

The upper floors facing Fisgard Street retain their original window and door openings. The upper floor windows of 543-545 ½ Fisgard Street have been replaced with wooden-sash replicas. The upper floor windows of 539-541 ½ Fisgard Street are original.

There are several wooden sash windows on the Fan Tan Alley (east) elevation of the Sheam & Low Building. A number of original and replaced wooden sash windows were also noted on the rear elevation of the three buildings, as well as the Fan Tan Alley elevation of the Sing Lee Building.

Conservation Strategy: Preservation, Rehabilitation & Restoration

- Develop program for the conservation of the windows and doors on all facades.
- Retain existing window sashes; repair as required; install replacement matching sashes where missing or beyond repair.
- Preserve and repair as required, using in kind repair techniques where feasible.

- Retain historic glass, where possible, particularly any historic cylinder glass that can be salvaged. Where broken glass exists in historic wood-sash windows, the broken glass should be replaced. Window repairs should be undertaken by a contractor skilled in heritage restoration.
- Prime and repaint as required in appropriate colour, based on historical colour scheme devised by Heritage Consultant.

5.5.2 STOREFRONTS

Although their upper floors were designed as an integrated unit, the storefront treatments on the two Fisgard Street buildings are completely different. The 1888 Sheam & Low storefront was more closed and solid, while the 1901-02 Lee Mong Kow storefront was fully glazed, similar to a design used in other buildings by Hooper. Some storefront elements have been altered over time, relating to individual tenant improvements. There is also a variety of tenant signs, colours and attachments that disrupt the historic character. The nature of the evolution of the building, however, is part of its historic interest, and the intent is not an overall return to original appearance. Some evolved elements are proposed for retention, while a more consistent approach to signs and colours is proposed.

Conservation Strategy: Preservation & Rehabilitation

General Recommendations:
- Retain and maintain original storefront elements.
- Accept evolution of some storefront elements.
- Reinstate a rehabilitated wooden storefront system where required. Reference the historic design as noted in archival images and original architectural drawings. The design of the rehabilitated storefronts should resemble the original historic precedents.
- Institute heritage plan for signage control, which can be implemented for future tenant changes.

Sheam & Low Building *(543-45 1/2 Fisgard Street):*
- Accept evolution of the 545 storefront. Retain existing materials and configuration, and repair in kind as required.
- Replace unsympathetic aluminum profiles with sympathetic wooden profiles.
- Replace unsympathetic later doors, as required.
- Retain granite curbs; clean and repair as required.
- Repaint wood elements based on updated historical colour scheme.

Lee Mong Kow Building *(539-41 1/2 Fisgard Street):*
- Preserve existing historic masonry and storefront profiles, and harware.
- Replace unsympathetic later doors, as required.
- Repaint wood elements based on updated historical colour scheme.

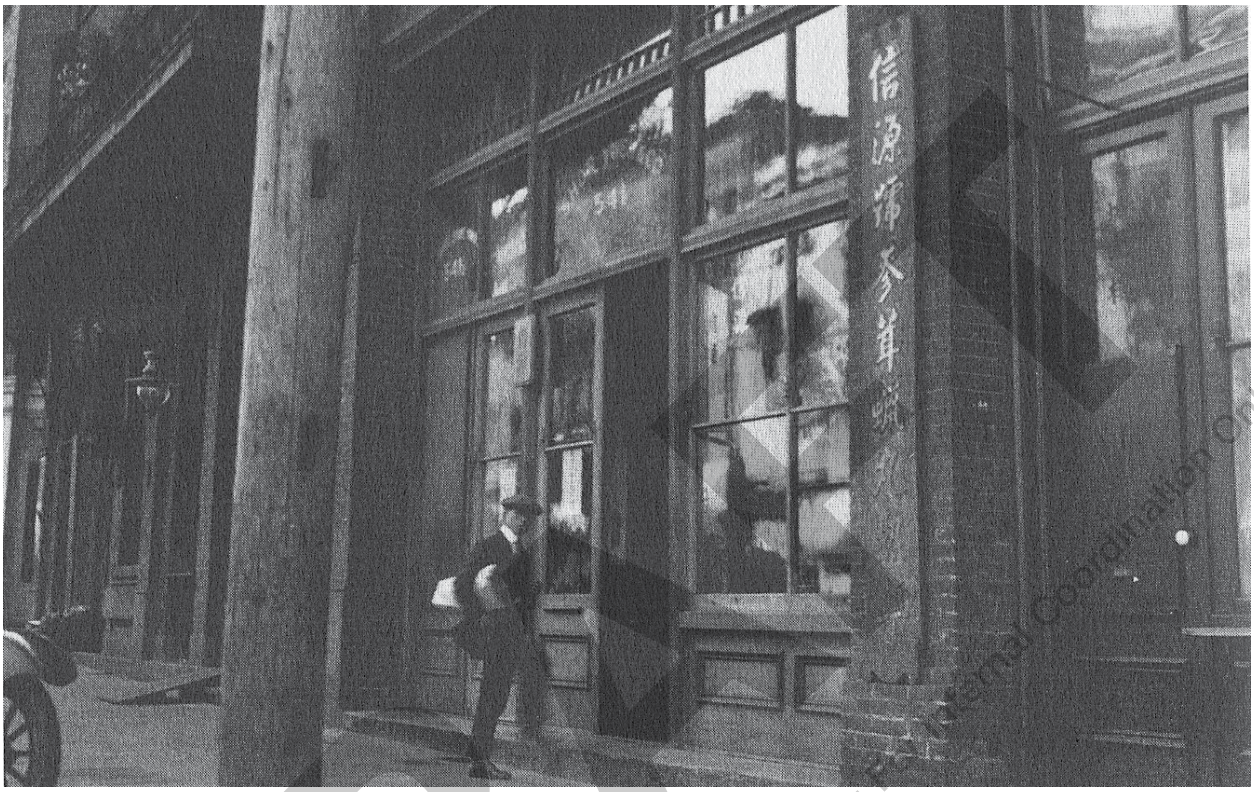
Sing Lee Building *(16-20 Fan Tan Alley):*
- Preserve existing historic masonry and storefront profiles.
- Review overall historical colour scheme.

5.6 SIGNAGE

Commercial signs are an integral feature of historic commercial buildings. Different types of signs were fabricated in traditional materials with painted or three-dimensional letters, including fascia signs, projecting signs and painted window signs. Signs often reflect the ethnic history of a neighborhood and its character, as well as the social and business activities carried within it, and it is important to preserve or commemorate these markers of the building's social and economic history.

Conservation Strategy: Rehabilitation
When considering new signs on a heritage building, the design should be in accordance with the Parks Canada *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, which states that "new signage should be compatible

Above: Original storefront, 545 Fisgard Street, February 1900. [British Columbia Archives C-06728]
Below: Photos showing existing storefront configuration as viewed from Fisgard Street. Note original door and window openings have been altered at some point in time.



Top: 539-543 1/3 Fisgard in the 1920s; Shon Yuen & Co. at 541 Fisgard. [Lai, Forbidden City, page 148]
Bottom: Photos showing existing storefront configuration as viewed from Fisgard Street.

Existing condition of the original storefront shown in the photo above. Note existing replacement storefront door assembly, including sidelights and transom (with decal of address "541").

Existing condition of the adjacent original storefront, which is partially shown in the photo above. Note existing replacement door to access upper floor units.

Photos showing existing storefront conditions along Fan Tan Alley.

with the building in terms of size, scale, material, style and colour. In addition, new signs should not obscure, damage or destroy character-defining elements of the building."

- New signs can be inspired by historical signs on the building, signs from an earlier era or contemporary materials that are sympathetic to the building.
- Sign fixings or hangers should be carefully attached to the building in the least intrusive manner possible. On masonry walls, consider attaching into mortar rather than brick or stone.
- Signs were historically illuminated with front lighting.
- Future tenant signage will require a City of Victoria sign application and must conform to applicable bylaws.

5.6.1 PAINTED SIGNS

The brickwork on the Fisgard Street facades below the parapet cornice displays a continuous sign band of four outlined panels, which are coloured in white on the 1902 postcard. These would have been typical for the placement of painted signs, which would have advertised the businesses at the street level. No evidence survives of what the signs originally advertised.

An example of typical restored original painted Chinatown business signs may be found on the façade of the Finlayson Building, 528-32 Pandora Street. The original 1882 signs were uncovered when stucco and paint was removed from the facades, and the original signs were traced, documented and repainted.

As later paint layers were removed, substantial traces of the original signs were uncovered. The west sign, "HIP LUNG CO." consisted of 12" high serif letters painted in black, on a painted white background. The east sign, "KWONG ON TAI CO." consisted of 12" high serif letters painted in red with a half-inch black border, on a painted white background. Both of these signs advertised businesses that dealt in opium. The restoration of these signs was an exact reproduction. The existing letters were traced with

water soluble grease pencil, sealed with a clear acrylic sealer #17-500, and overpainted with a primer coat. Significantly, it was determined that the lettering enamel colours still in current use were an exact match for the original colours.

- **Background:** Lettering White (101-L)
- **West Sign Letters & East Sign Letter Outline:** Black (199-L)
- **East Sign Letters:** Bright Red (104-L)
- Above colours based on: *Lettering Enamels Colours Palette*

The four sign panels therefore present an historically accurate opportunity for enhanced business signage.

5.7 EXTERIOR COLOUR SCHEDULE

Part of the conservation process is to finish the building in historically appropriate paint colours. A restoration colour scheme will be developed in conjunction with the project architect.

The building displays areas where there was original applied paint. The final colour scheme will be based on a colour palette that will be determined by sampling. Once safe access is possible on-site testing will be carried out, and paint samples assessed by microscopic analysis in order to reveal the original colour scheme of the structure. The storefront in the 1901-02 section was accessible and was tested to match ***Gloss Black VC-35***.

Conservation Strategy: Investigation.

- Determine an appropriate historic colour scheme for exterior painted finishes.

Detail of "Chinatown and the Chinese Church, looking west on Fisgard Street", circa 1902. [City of Victoria Archives M05582]

Existing condition of signage band below the parapet cornice.

Middle and bottom: restored 1882 painted signs, 528-32 Pandora Avenue.

TABLE 5.7A - PRELIMINARY COLOUR SCHEME: 539-545 FISGARD STREET

ELEMENT	COLOUR	CODE*	SAMPLE	FINISH
Brick Masonry (Front Elevation)	Sienna**	2092-20		Satin
Parging & Sills (Front Elevation)	Haddington Grey	VC-15		Satin
Cornices (Front Elevation)	Haddington Gray	VC-15		Gloss
Wood Window Frames & Sashes	Gloss Black	VC-35		High-Gloss
Storefronts Lee Mong Kow Building *539-541 Fisgard Street*	Gloss Black	VC-35		High Gloss
Storefronts Sheam & Low Building *543-545 Fisgard Street*	TBD	-	n/a	-
Projecting Iron Balconies (Front Elevation)	Gloss Black	VC-35		High Gloss

TABLE 5.7B - PRELIMINARY COLOUR SCHEME: 16-20 FAN TAN ALLEY

ELEMENT	COLOUR	CODE	SAMPLE	FINISH
Wood Window Frames & Sashes	TBD	-	n/a	High Gloss
Upper Doorway Surrounds	Cat's Eye**	2036-10		High Gloss
Storefronts	TBD	-	n/a	High Gloss

* VC: Paint match to Benjamin Moore *Historical Vancouver True Colours*.
** Sienna and Cat's Eye are part of Benjamin Moore *Colour Preview*® collection.

6 MAINTENANCE PLAN

A Maintenance Plan should be adopted by the property owner, who is responsible for the long-term protection of the heritage features of the Sheam & Low Building, the Lee Mong Kow Building, and the Sing Lee Building. The Maintenance Plan should include provisions for:

- Copies of the Maintenance Plan and this Conservation Report to be incorporated into the terms of reference for the management and maintenance contract for the building;
- Cyclical maintenance procedures to be adopted as outlined below;
- Record drawings and photos of the building to be kept by the management / maintenance contractor; and
- Records of all maintenance procedures to be kept by the owner.

A thorough maintenance plan will ensure the integrity of all the heritage buildings is preserved. If existing materials are regularly maintained and deterioration is significantly reduced or prevented, the integrity of materials and workmanship of the building will be protected. Proper maintenance is the most cost effective method of extending the life of a building, and preserving its character-defining elements. The survival of historic buildings in good condition is primarily due to regular upkeep and the preservation of historic materials.

6.1 MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

A maintenance schedule should be formulated that adheres to the *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. As defined by the *Standards & Guidelines*, maintenance is defined as:

> *Routine, cyclical, non-destructive actions necessary to slow the deterioration of an historic place. It entails periodic inspection; routine, cyclical, non-destructive cleaning; minor repair and refinishing operations; replacement of damaged or deteriorated materials that are impractical to save.*

The assumption that newly renovated buildings become immune to deterioration and require less maintenance is a falsehood. Rather, newly renovated buildings require heightened vigilance to spot errors in construction where previous problems had not occurred, and where deterioration may gain a foothold.

Routine maintenance keeps water out of the building, which is the single most damaging element to a heritage building. Maintenance also prevents damage by sun, wind, snow, frost and all weather; prevents damage by insects and vermin; and aids in protecting all parts of the building against deterioration. The effort and expense expended on an aggressive maintenance will not only lead to a higher degree of preservation, but also over time potentially save large amount of money otherwise required for later repairs.

6.2 PERMITTING

Repair activities, such as simple in-kind repair of materials, or repainting in the same colour, should be exempt from requiring city permits. Other more intensive activities will require the issuance of a Heritage Alteration Permit.

6.3 ROUTINE, CYCLICAL AND NON-DESTRUCTIVE CLEANING

Following the *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, be mindful of the principle that recommends "using the gentlest means possible". Any cleaning procedures should be undertaken on a routine basis and should be undertaken with non-destructive methods. Cleaning should be limited to the exterior material such as concrete and stucco wall surfaces and wood elements such as storefront frames. All of these elements are usually easily cleaned, simply with a soft, natural bristle brush, without water, to remove dirt and other material. If a more intensive cleaning is required, this can be accomplished

with warm water, mild detergent and a soft bristle brush. High-pressure washing, sandblasting or other abrasive cleaning should not be undertaken under any circumstances.

6.4 REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENT OF DETERIORATED MATERIALS

Interventions such as repairs and replacements must conform to the *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. The building's character-defining elements – characteristics of the building that contribute to its heritage value (and identified in the Statement of Significance) such as materials, form, configuration, etc. - must be conserved, referencing the following principles to guide interventions:

- An approach of minimal intervention must be adopted - where intervention is carried out it will be by the least intrusive and most gentle means possible.
- Repair rather than replace character-defining elements.
- Repair character-defining elements using recognized conservation methods.
- Replace 'in kind' extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements.
- Make interventions physically and visually compatible with the historic place.

6.5 INSPECTIONS

Inspections are a key element in the maintenance plan, and should be carried out by a qualified person or firm, preferably with experience in the assessment of heritage buildings. These inspections should be conducted on a regular and timely schedule. The inspection should address all aspects of the building including exterior, interior and site conditions. It makes good sense to inspect a building in wet weather, as well as in dry, in order to see how water runs off – or through – a building. From this inspection, an inspection report should be compiled that will include notes, sketches and observations. It is helpful for the inspector to have copies of the building's elevation drawings on which to mark areas of concern such as cracks, staining and rot. These observations can then be included in the report. The report need not be overly complicated or formal, but must be thorough, clear and concise. Issues of concern, taken from the report should then be entered in a log book so that corrective action can be documented and tracked. Major issues of concern should be extracted from the report by the property manager.

An appropriate schedule for regular, periodic inspections would be twice a year, preferably during spring and fall. The spring inspection should be more rigorous since in spring moisture-related deterioration is most visible, and because needed work, such as painting, can be completed during the good weather in summer. The fall inspection should focus on seasonal issues such as weather-sealants, mechanical (heating) systems and drainage issues. Comprehensive inspections should occur at five-year periods, comparing records from previous inspections and the original work, particularly in monitoring structural movement and durability of utilities. Inspections should also occur after major storms.

6.6 INFORMATION FILE

The building should have its own information file where an inspection report can be filed. This file should also contain the log book that itemizes problems and corrective action. Additionally, this file should contain building plans, building permits, heritage reports, photographs and other relevant documentation so that a complete understanding of the building and its evolution is readily available, which will aid in determining appropriate interventions when needed.

The file should also contain a list outlining the finishes and materials used, and information detailing where they are available (store, supplier). The building owner should keep on hand a stock of spare materials for minor repairs.

6.6.1 LOG BOOK

The maintenance log book is an important maintenance tool that should be kept to record all maintenance activities, recurring problems and building observations and will assist in the overall maintenance planning of the building. Routine maintenance work should be noted in the maintenance log to keep track of past and plan future activities. All items noted on the maintenance log should indicate the date, problem, type of repair, location and all other observations and information pertaining to each specific maintenance activity.

Each log should include the full list of recommended maintenance and inspection areas noted in this Maintenance Plan, to ensure a record of all activities is maintained. A full record of these activities will help in planning future repairs and provide valuable building information for all parties involved in the overall maintenance and operation of the building, and will provide essential information for long term programming and determining of future budgets. It will also serve as a reminded to amend the maintenance and inspection activities should new issues be discovered or previous recommendations prove inaccurate.

The log book will also indicate unexpectedly repeated repairs, which may help in solving more serious problems that may arise in the historic building. The log book is a living document that will require constant adding to, and should be kept in the information file along with other documentation noted in section ***6.6 Information File***.

6.7 EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE

Water, in all its forms and sources (rain, snow, frost, rising ground water, leaking pipes, back-splash, etc.) is the single most damaging element to historic buildings.

The most common place for water to enter a building is through the roof. Keeping roofs repaired or renewed is the most cost-effective maintenance option. Evidence of a small interior leak should be viewed as a warning for a much larger and worrisome water damage problem elsewhere and should be fixed immediately.

6.7.1 INSPECTION CHECKLIST

The following checklist considers a wide range of potential problems specific to the Sheam & Low Building, the Lee Mong Kow Building, and the Sing Lee Building, such as water/moisture penetration, material deterioration and structural deterioration. This does not include interior inspections.

EXTERIOR INSPECTION

Foundation

- ☐ Does pointing need repair?
- ☐ Paint peeling? Cracking?
- ☐ Is bedding mortar sound?
- ☐ Moisture: Is rising damp present?
- ☐ Is there back splashing from ground to structure?
- ☐ Is any moisture problem general or local?
- ☐ Is spalling from freezing present? (Flakes or powder?)
- ☐ Is efflorescence present?
- ☐ Is spalling from sub-fluorescence present?
- ☐ Is damp proof course present?
- ☐ Are there shrinkage cracks in the foundation?
- ☐ Are there movement cracks in the foundation?
- ☐ Is crack monitoring required?
- ☐ Is uneven foundation settlement evident?
- ☐ Do foundation openings (doors and windows) show: rust; rot; insect attack; paint failure; soil build-up;
- ☐ Deflection of lintels?

Masonry

- ☐ Are moisture problems present? (Rising damp, rain penetration, condensation, water run-off from roof, sills, or ledges?)
- ☐ Is spalling from freezing present? Location?
- ☐ Is efflorescence present? Location?
- ☐ Is spalling from sub-florescence present? Location?
- ☐ Need for pointing repair? Condition of existing pointing and re-pointing?
- ☐ Is bedding mortar sound?
- ☐ Are there cracks due to shrinking and expansion?
- ☐ Are there cracks due to structural movement?
- ☐ Are there unexplained cracks?
- ☐ Do cracks require continued monitoring?
- ☐ Are there signs of steel or iron corrosion?
- ☐ Are there stains present? Rust, copper, organic, paints, oils / tars? Cause?
- ☐ Does the surface need cleaning?

Wood Elements

- ☐ Are there moisture problems present? (Rising damp, rain penetration, condensation moisture from plants, water run-off from roof, sills, or ledges?)
- ☐ Is wood in direct contact with the ground?
- ☐ Is there insect attack present? Where and probable source?
- ☐ Is there fungal attack present? Where and probable source?
- ☐ Are there any other forms of biological attack? (Moss, birds, etc.) Where and probable source?
- ☐ Is any wood surface damaged from UV radiation? (bleached surface, loose surface fibres)
- ☐ Is any wood warped, cupped or twisted?
- ☐ Is any wood split? Are there loose knots?
- ☐ Are nails pulling loose or rusted?
- ☐ Is there any staining of wood elements? Source?

Condition of Exterior Painted Materials

- ☐ Paint shows: blistering, sagging or wrinkling, alligatoring, peeling. Cause?
- ☐ Paint has the following stains: rust, bleeding knots, mildew, etc. Cause?
- ☐ Paint cleanliness, especially at air vents?

Storefronts

- ☐ Are there moisture problems present? (Rising damp, rain penetration, condensation, water run-off from roof, sills, or ledges?)
- ☐ Are materials in direct contact with the ground without proper protection?
- ☐ Is there insect attack present? Where and probable source?
- ☐ Is there fungal attack present? Where and probable source?
- ☐ Are there any other forms of biological attack? (Moss, birds, etc.) Where and probable source?
- ☐ Is any surface damaged from UV radiation?
- ☐ Is any wood warped, cupped or twisted?
- ☐ Is any wood split? Are there loose knots?
- ☐ Are nails pulling loose or rusted?
- ☐ Is there any staining of wood elements? Source?

Windows

- ☐ Is there glass cracked or missing?
- ☐ If the glazing is puttied has it gone brittle and cracked? Fallen out? Painted to shed water?
- ☐ If the glass is secured by beading, are the beads in good condition?
- ☐ Is there condensation or water damage to the paint?
- ☐ Are the sashes easy to operate? If hinged, do they swing freely?
- ☐ Is the frame free from distortion?
- ☐ Do sills show weathering or deterioration?
- ☐ Are drip mouldings/flashing above the windows properly shedding water?
- ☐ Is the caulking between the frame and the cladding in good condition?

Doors

- ☐ Do the doors create a good seal when closed?
- ☐ Are the hinges sprung? In need of lubrication?
- ☐ Do locks and latches work freely?
- ☐ If glazed, is the glass in good condition? Does the putty need repair?
- ☐ Are door frames wicking up water? Where? Why?
- ☐ Are door frames caulked at the cladding? Is the caulking in good condition?
- ☐ What is the condition of the sill?

Gutters and Downspouts
- ☐ Are downspouts leaking? Clogged? Are there holes or corrosion? (Water against structure)
- ☐ Are downspouts complete without any missing sections? Are they properly connected?
- ☐ Is the water being effectively carried away from the downspout by a drainage system?
- ☐ Do downspouts drain completely away?

Roof
- ☐ Are there water blockage points?
- ☐ Is the leading edge of the roof wet?
- ☐ Is there evidence of biological attack? (Fungus, moss, birds, insects)
- ☐ Are flashings well seated?
- ☐ Are metal joints and seams sound?
- ☐ Is there rubbish buildup on the roof?
- ☐ Are there blisters or slits in the membrane?
- ☐ Are the drain pipes plugged or standing proud?
- ☐ Is water ponding present?

INTERIOR INSPECTION

Basement
- ☐ Are there signs of moisture damage to the walls? Is masonry cracked, discoloured, spalling?
- ☐ Is wood cracked, peeling rotting? Does it appear wet when surroundings are dry?
- ☐ Are there signs of past flooding, or leaks from the floor above? Is the floor damp?
- ☐ Are walls even or buckling or cracked? Is the floor cracked or heaved?
- ☐ Are there signs of insect or rodent infestation?

Commercial Space
- ☐ Materials: plaster, wood, metal, masonry – are they sound, or uneven, cracked, out of plumb or alignment; are there signs of settlement, old, or recent (bulging walls, long cracks, etc)?
- ☐ Finishes: paints, stains, etc. – are they dirty, peeling, stained, cracked?
- ☐ Are there any signs of water leakage or moisture damage? (Mould? Water-stains?)

Concealed spaces
- ☐ Is light visible through walls, to the outsider or to another space?
- ☐ Are the ventilators for windowless spaces clear and functional?
- ☐ Do pipes or exhausts that pass through concealed spaces leak?
- ☐ Are wooden elements soft, damp, cracked? Is metal material rusted, paint peeling or off altogether?
- ☐ Infestations - are there signs of birds, bats, insects, rodents, past or present?

6.7.2 MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME

INSPECTION CYCLE:

Daily
- Observations noted during cleaning (cracks; damp, dripping pipes; malfunctioning hardware; etc.) to be noted in log book or building file.

Semi-annually
- Semi-annual inspection and report with special focus on seasonal issues.
- Thorough cleaning of drainage system to cope with winter rains and summer storms
- Check condition of weather sealants (Fall).
- Clean the exterior using a soft bristle broom/ brush.

Annually (Spring)
- Inspect concrete for cracks, deterioration.
- Inspect metal elements, especially in areas that may trap water.
- Inspect windows for paint and glazing compound failure, corrosion and wood decay and proper operation.
- Complete annual inspection and report.
- Clean out of all perimeter drains and rainwater systems.
- Touch up worn paint on the building's exterior.
- Check for plant, insect or animal infestation.
- Routine cleaning, as required.

Five-Year Cycle
- A full inspection report should be undertaken every five years comparing records from previous inspections and the original work, particularly monitoring structural movement and durability of utilities.
- Repaint windows every five to fifteen years.

Ten-Year Cycle
- Check condition of roof every ten years after last replacement.

Twenty-Year Cycle
- Confirm condition of roof and estimate effective lifespan. Replace when required.

Major Maintenance Work (as required)
- Thorough repainting, downspout and drain replacement; replacement of deteriorated building materials; etc.
-

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH SUMMARY

HISTORIC NAME
Sheam & Low Building
CIVIC ADDRESS
543-545½ Fisgard Street
ORIGINAL OWNERS
Sheam Tip and Low Yan San
ARCHITECT
Fisher & Wilson
BUILDER
George Moore
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION
1888

HISTORIC NAME
Lee Mong Kow Building
CIVIC ADDRESS
539-541½ Fisgard Street
ORIGINAL OWNER
Lee Mong Kow
ARCHITECT
Thomas Hooper
BUILDER
George Snider
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION
1901-1902

HISTORIC NAME
Sing Lee Building
CIVIC ADDRESS
16-20 Fan Tan Alley
ORIGINAL OWNER
Marie Boucherat
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION
1913

Building Permits
- City of Victoria Building Permit #3257: November 27, 1911; J. Boucherat; Fisgard Street; pt G/444; Alterations; 1-storey brick; 1 room; $200.
- City of Victoria Building Permit #5949: July 30, 1913; Singh [Sing?] Lee; Fisgard Street; G/444; Stores; 2-storey, Class A; 4 rooms; $5,000.
- City of Victoria Building Permit #6828: December 30, 1914; Quong Sing Tai Co.; 543 Fisgard; 444/445; Alterations; Entrance, Class B, 2-storey; $300.
- City of Victoria Building Permit #B-0591; September 29, 1919; Jim Yip Lung & Yin Kim Yuen; Fisgard Street; G/west pt 444 & east pt 445; Alterations; $1,500.
- City of Victoria Building Permit #B-0780: April 4, 1920; Yip Lung & Co.; Fisgard Street; pt G/444; Alterations; brick & steel; $1,500.

Water Permits
- City of Victoria Plumbing Permit #097: September 19, 1893; 536-42-44 Cormorant [Pandora]; Lot 438; Offner, A.; John Teague, Agent for Owner; 4 stores [and 2-4 Fan Tan Alley / Elwood Watkins, 1920).
- City of Victoria Plumbing Permit #0278: December 18, 1901; 16-18 Fan Tan Alley; for Lee Mong Kow; & J. Boucherat; Thos. Hooper, Agent for Owner; Stores. Note: "See PP #97."

Architectural Plans
- None located.

City of Victoria Tax Assessment Records
- Lot 445, Block G: 60' x 120' and 1/3 Lot 444 (20' wide). Width of eastern section approximately 40 feet; Width of western section approximately 45 feet.
- 1879: Lot 445, Block G; 60' x 120'; Fisgard Street; John Porter (crossed out) Loo Chu Fan (pencilled in); Land: $400 Improvements: $300
- 1880: Same, but John Porter, sold to R. Finlayson. 1881: Sold to Loo Chew Fan, per Kwong Lee.
- 1882/83 - 1884: Same.
- 1885: Land: $2,000
- 1886/87: Sold to Lee Yick.
- 1888: Same.
- 1889: Lot 445 (60') + 1/3 Lot 444 (20'); Lee Yick: Land: $3,000 + $1,000 Improvements: $6,500 (combined.
- 1890: Sold to J. Boucherat.

- 1891: Land: (1/3 444) $1,700 (445) $5,100 Improvements: $7,500 (combined).
- 1892: Lot 445: Land: $5,100 Improvements: $2,250 Lot: 1/3 444 - ?
- 1894: Lot 445: Land: $4,250 Improvements: $1,125.
- 1897: Lot 445: Land: $3,600 Improvements: $3,000 (likely just inflation).
- 1900: Same.
- 1901: Owner: Marie Boucherat.
  - Lot Pt 444 Land $1,400 Improvements $2,000
  - Lot 445 Land $3,600 Improvements $3,000
- 1902: Owner: Marie Boucherat / Lee Mong Kow.
  - Owner: Lee Mong Kow; Lot W Pt 445 Land $2,400 Improvements $6,000
  - Owner: Marie Boucherat; Lot W Pt 444 Land $1,400 Improvements $2,000
  - Owner: Marie Boucherat; Lot E pt445 Land $1,400 Improvements $3,000
- 1905: Owner: Lee Mong Kow.
  - Lot W Pt 445; 40' by 120'; Land $2,400 Improvements $6,000 [Note: Lot 445 subdivided in 1902. The east part retains the $3,000 in improvements, so the $6,000 is the entire building.]
- 1916:
  - Lot W Pt 444: Owner: Marie Boucherat. Roll 682: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $7,344 Improvements: $6,300
  - Lot E Pt 445: Owner: Marie Boucherat Roll 683: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $7,344 Improvements: $2,700
  - Lot W Pt 445: Owner: Lee Mong Kow Roll 684: 40 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $14,688 Improvements: $5,400
- 1917:
  - Lot W Pt 444: Owner: Marie Boucherat. Roll 682: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $6,500 Improvements: $6,300
  - Lot E Pt 445: Owner: Marie Boucherat Roll 683: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $6,500 Improvements: $2,700
  - Lot W Pt 445: Owner: Lee Mong Kow Roll 684: 40 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $13,000 Improvements: $5,400
- 1918:
  - Lot W Pt 444: Owner: Marie Boucherat. Roll 682: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $5,850 Improvements: $6,300
  - Lot E Pt 445: Owner: Marie Boucherat Roll 683: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $5,850 Improvements: $2,700
  - Lot W Pt 445: Owner: Lee Mong Kow Roll 684: 40 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $11,700 Improvements: $5,400
- 1919:
  - Lot W Pt 444 [G]: Owner: Marie Boucherat (al); L.U. Compass, agent; Roll 682: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $5,260 Improvements $6,300
  - Lot E Pt 445 [G]: Owner: Marie Boucherat (al); L.U. Compass, agent; Roll 683: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $5,080 Improvements $2,700
  - Lot W Pt 445 [G]: Owner: Lee Mong Kow; L.U. Compass, agent; Roll 683: 40 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $10,210 Improvements $5,400
- 1920:
  - Lot W Pt 444 [G]: Owner: Marie Boucherat (al); L.U. Compass, agent; Roll 682: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $5,260 Improvements $6,300 + $700
  - Lot E Pt 445 [G]: Owner: Marie Boucherat (al); L.U. Compass, agent; Roll 683: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $5,080 Improvements $2,700 + $700
  - Lot W Pt 445 [G]: Owner: Lee Mong Kow; L.U. Compass, agent; Roll 683: 40 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $10,210 Improvements $5,400

- 1921:
  - Lot W Pt 444 [G]: Owner: Marie Boucherat (al); L.U. Compass, agent; Roll 682: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $5,260 Improvements $7,000
  - Lot E Pt 445 [G]: Owner: Marie Boucherat (al); L.U. Compass, agent; Roll 683: 20 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $5,080 Improvements $3,400
  - Lot W Pt 445 [G]: Owner: Lee Mong Kow; L.U. Compass, agent; Roll 683: 40 x 120; Fisgard & Government. Land: $10,210 Improvements $5,400

Directories

- 1890 Henderson's City of Victoria Directory, page 60:
  Fisguard 35 Ting, Lee & Bros., grocers
  Fisguard 37 Lai, Hop & Co.
- 1900-01 Henderson's BC Gazetteer & Directory, page 979:
  Fisguard 35 Kwong Sun Tai Co.
  Fisguard 37 Sing Lee Co., groceries.
- 1902 Henderson's BC Gazetteer & Directory, page 823:
  Fisguard 33 Shon Yuen & Co., opium.
  Fisguard 35 Kwong Sun Tai Co.
  Fisguard 37 Sing Lee Co., groceries.
- 1903 Henderson's BC Gazetteer & Directory, page 881:
  Fisguard 31 Hong Sun & Co., merchants.
  Fisguard 33 Shon Yuen & Co., opium.
  Fisguard 35 Kwong Sun Tai & Co, contractors.
  Fisguard 37 Sing Lee Co., groceries.
- 1914 Henderson's Greater Victoria City Directory:
  Fan Tan not listed; no listing under names.
- 1914 Directory of Victoria City Tregillus-Thompson:
  Fan Tan not listed.
- 1915 Henderson's Greater Victoria City Directory:
  Fan Tan not listed; no listing under names.

Other References

- City of Victoria Archives: family photographs and related material. Mrs. Lee Mong Kow was the daughter of Sam Kee.
- VICINV: Built in two stages; the eastern two bays were built in 1888, and the western two bays were built in 1901. During the late nineteenth century, there was an opium factory at the rear. Assessment information back to 1879. Land Titles: Sheam Tip and Loo Yan San owned the property from June 1887 to April 1890. It was then acquired by J. Boucherat, and was registered to Lee Mong Kow by 1902. Resource Information Centre: Information and Land Titles on file; shows that Sheam Tip and Low Yan San owned the property from June 1887 until April 1890.

Published References

- *Victoria Daily Times*, June 28, 1888, page 4: Messrs. Fisher & Wilson have the following on hand for this city… a couple of stores for a Chinese firm on Fisguard street, $7,000.
- *Victoria Daily Times*, October 18, 1888, page 2: From Fisher & Wilson asking the Council to repair and lay sidewalks in front of new buildings on Fisguard street. Referred to Street Committee to report.
- *Victoria Daily Times*, December 27, 1888, page 3: Chinamen buildings in Fisguard street; Fisher & Wilson, contractors [sic], $5,500.

- *Victoria Daily Colonist*, January 1, 1889, Supplement, page 2 (for 1888): Fisgard Street – Shean [sic] Tip and Low Yan San, brick block, stores and dwellings. Fisher & Wilson, architects, George Moore, builder - $5,000.
- *Victoria Daily Times*, October 21, 1901, page 8; October 22, 1901, page 3; and October 23, 1901, Page 3: NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS.

Tenders will be received on or before Saturday, Oct. 26th, at 12 o'clock noon, for the erection and completion of a two storey brick building on Fisgard street.

Plans and specifications can be seen at the office of the undersigned.

Lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

THOMAS HOOPER, Architect.

Rooms 9 and 11, Five Sisters' Block.

- *Victoria Daily Times*, October 22, 1901, page 5: Tenders are being called in this issue by Thomas Hooper the architect, for the erection of a two-storey building on Fisguard street.
- *Victoria Daily Times*, December 2, 1901, page 8: A new two-storey brick building is being erected on Fisgard street for a company of which Lee Mong Kow is the head. The new structure will have a frontage of 60 feet and a depth of 60. The storeys will be exceptionally high, 17 feet. In the rear of the building another will be constructed, to be used in connection with the main building. It will be 40 by 50, and will thus give the entire place a depth of 110 feet. The cost will be in the neighbourhood of $7,000. Already a considerable portion of the brick work for one storey has been done, and should the weather prove favorable this part of the construction will be completed in a couple of weeks. The contract is in the hands of George Snider, and Thomas Hooper is the architect.
- *Victoria Daily Colonist*, December 3, 1901, page 6: NEW BLOCK. – Lee Mong Kow is the head of a company which is building a new two-storey brick structure on Fisgard street. The building will have a frontage of 60 feet and a depth of 60 feet. The stories will be 17 feet high. In the rear another structure will be built, to be used in connection with the main building. It will be 50 feet by 40 feet and will give the entire place a depth of 110 feet. The total cost will be about $7,000. Part of the brick work for one store has been done, and if the weather remains favorable, the building will be finished in a couple of weeks. George Snider has the contract and Thomas Hooper is the architect.
- *Victoria Daily Times*, January 4, 1902, page 3: Lee Mong Kow, two storey brick building on Fisgard street - $8,000.
- *Victoria Daily Colonist*, January 5, 1902, page 6 (for 1901): Lee Mong Kow, two storey brick building on Fisgard street - $7,000.
- *Victoria Daily Times*, July 15, 1902, page 3: Messrs. Hooper & Watkins, architects, on behalf of Lee Mong Kow and Ling Long Shee, asked for sidewalks and stone crossing on Fisguard street, these firms agreeing to pay for cost of the same.
- *Victoria Daily Colonist*, July 31, 1913, page 6: Building Progress: Building permits were issued yesterday by the building inspector: to Sing Lee, stores on Fisguard Street, $5,000.

Publications

- Lai, Dr. David Chuenyan. *Chinese Community Leadership: Case Study of Victoria in Canada*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte. Ltd., 2010.
- Lai, Dr. David Chuenyan. *The Forbidden City within Victoria: Myth, Symbol and Streetscape of Canada's Earliest Chinatown*. Victoria, Orca Books, 1991.
- Luxton, Donald, ed. & comp. *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2nd. Ed, 2007.

Additional Research

- Additional research on the site has been conducted by John Adams: "541½ Fisgard Street: History of Occupants and Use, with Inventory of Heritage Features and Suggestions for Restoration or Refurbishing."

APPENDIX B-1 : WINDOWS & DOORS INVENTORY

WINDOWS INVENTORY

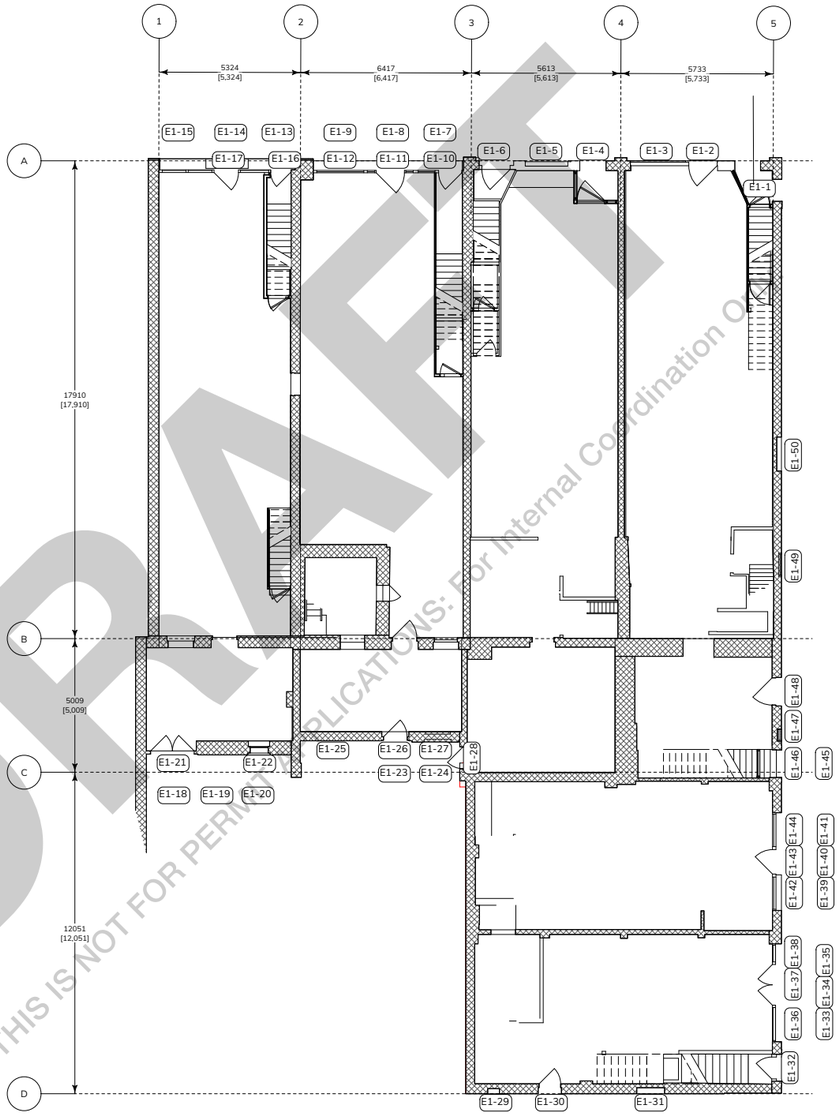
UNIT #	CONDITION & RECOMMENDED ACTION	NOTES
E1-1	Leave as is	
E1-2	Leave as is	
E1-3	Leave as is	
E1-4	New door, transom and jamb required to match unit E1-6	39 x 138
E1-5	New transom, sash and lower panel - in keeping with unit E1-6 - jamb in-situ to be restored	66 x 138
E1-6	slight restore in-situ /scuff sand, prime	
E1-7	Leave as is	
E1-8	Leave as is	
E1-9	leave as is - replace broken glass piece on site	4mm glass supply
E1-10	leave as is	
E1-11	leave as is	
E1-12	leave as is ** Exception requires new lower panel with bolection moulding to match design intent of doors.	68 x 25 panel - not a whole jamb just a sash type unit
E1-13	Leave as is	
E1-14	Leave as is	
E1-15	leave as is - replace broken glass piece on site	4mm glass supply
E1-16	New door in existing jamb to match door on site for E1-17	36 x 85
E1-17	slight restore in-situ /scuff sand, prime	
E1-18	Restore upper and new lower 6 lite sash - 5mm lam glass	38 x 52 also need sash stop, part strip, ropes, new lock, weights
E1-19	Restore upper and new lower 6 lite sash - 5mm lam glass	38 x 52 also need sash stop, part strip, ropes, new lock, weights

UNIT #	CONDITION & RECOMMENDED ACTION	NOTES
E1-20	New lower and new upper 6 lite sash - 5mm lam	38 x 52 also need sash stop, part strip, ropes, new lock, weights. May require new sill **
E1-21	Door set very poor condition and non-restorable. Recommend new mono-lite doors and jamb	60 x 80
E1-22	new 6 lite sash - existing sill rotted. **may require new jamb	33 x 30
E1-23	Condition unknown	unknown
E1-24	Condition unknown	unknown
E1-25	Restore in-situ	
E1-26	Door - restore in-situ	
E1-27	New sash 6 lite over 6 lite - jamb restore in-situ	38 x 70
E1-28	Door - leave as is	clean
E1-29	Clean only	clean
E1-30	Leave as is - Door	clean
E1-31	New lower sash 6-lites laminate 6mm glass	custom sticking 38 x 42
E1-32	Leave as is - Door	clean
E1-33	Leave as is - transom	clean
E1-34	Leave as is - transom	clean
E1-35	Leave as is - transom	clean
E1-36	Leave as is	clean
E1-37	Leave as is	clean
E1-38	Leave as is	clean
E1-39	Leave as is - transom	clean
E1-40	Leave as is - transom	clean

UNIT #	CONDITION & RECOMMENDED ACTION	NOTES
E1-41	Leave as is - transom	clean
E1-42	Leave as is	clean
E1-43	Leave as is	clean
E1-44	Leave as is	clean
E1-45	Leave as is - transom	clean
E1-46	Leave as is	clean
E1-47	replace plywood with lam glass in-situ	supply lam glass
E1-48	Leave as is - Door	clean
E1-49	Leave as is	clean
E1-50	Leave as is	clean

APPENDIX B-2: WINDOWS & DOORS INVENTORY - DRAWING REFERENCE

SCOPE OF WORK



2 typical heritage level 1 window

WAYMARK
www.waymarkarchitecture.com
1826 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4N5

No.	Date	Appr	Revision Notes

No.	Date	Issue Notes

IMPORTANT: This drawing is not to be used for construction until issued for that purpose by the Architect.

Prior to commencement of the Work, the Contractor shall review and verify drawing dimensions, datums, and levels to identify all descrepancies between information on this drawing and 1) actual site conditions; and 2) the remaining Contract Documents. The Contractor shall bring these items to the attention of the Architect for clarification before proceeding with the Work.

Seal

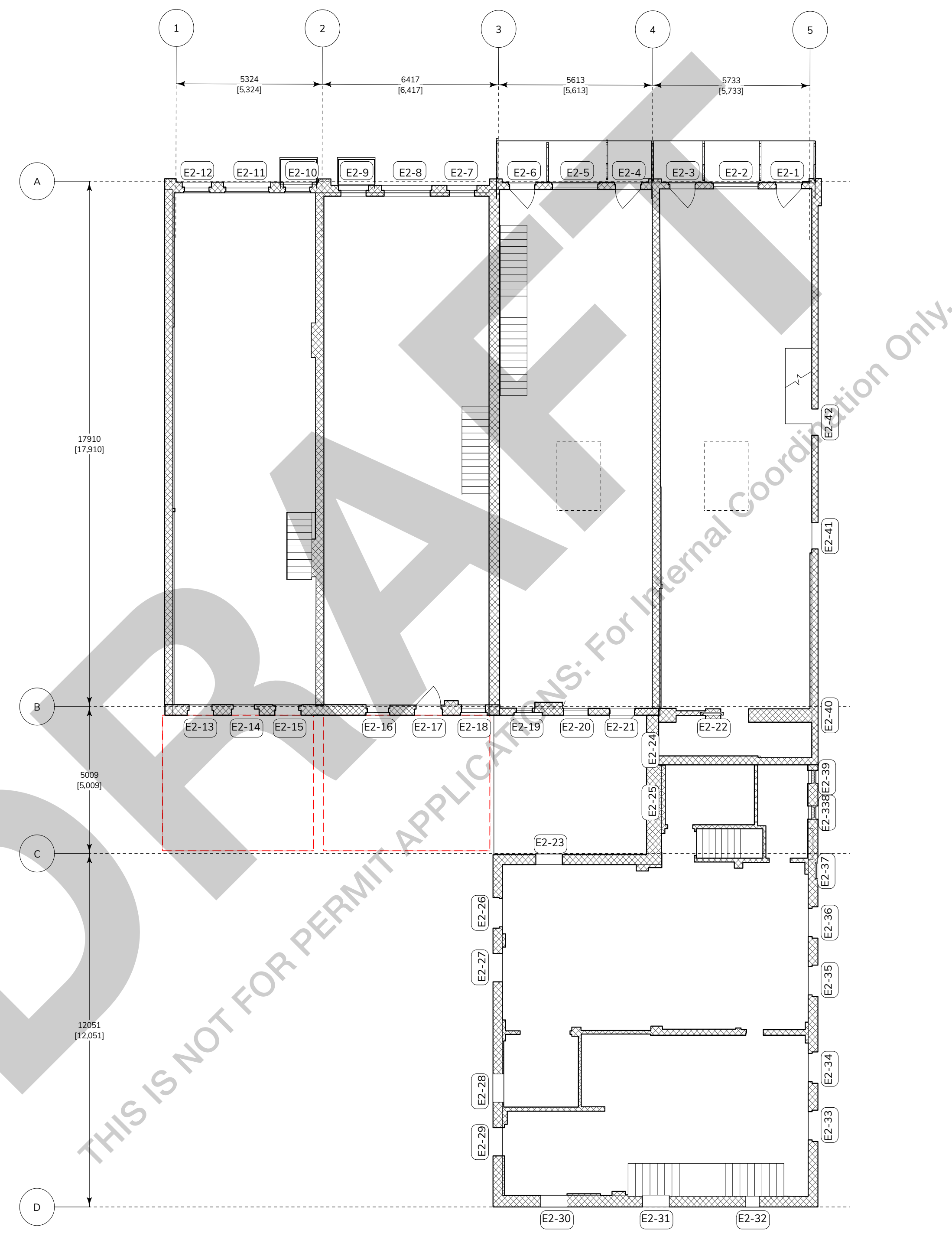
Owner:

Project Title:
539-545 1/2 Fisgard Street - BP1

Sheet Title:
HAP Level 1 Plan

Scale:	Sheet Number:
n/a	HAP002
Architect of Record: Will King	
Drawn by: WK, KT, CL	
Reviewed by GMV	
Project ID: 2019-005	

SCOPE OF WORK



2 typical heritage level 1 window

WAYMARK

www.waymarkarchitecture.com
1826 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4N5

No.	Date	Appr	Revision Notes

No.	Date	Issue Notes

IMPORTANT: This drawing is not to be used for construction until issued for that purpose by the Architect.

Prior to commencement of the Work, the Contractor shall review and verify drawing dimensions, datums, and levels to identify all descrepancies between information on this drawing and 1) actual site conditions; and 2) the remaining Contract Documents. The Contractor shall bring these items to the attention of the Architect for clarification before proceeding with the Work.

Seal:

Owner:

Project Title: 539-545 1/2 Fisgard Street - BP1

Sheet Title: HAP Level 2 Plan

Scale: n/a

Architect of Record: Will King

Drawn by: WK, KT, CL

Reviewed by: GMV

Project ID: 2019-005

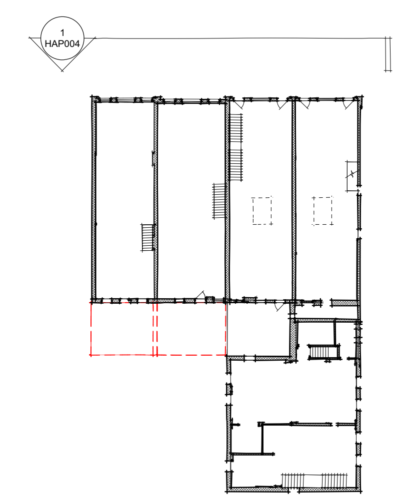
Sheet Number: HAP003

WAYMARK

1 North Elevation
Scale: 1:50

3 Window
Scale: N/A

4 Door
Scale: N/A



2 Key Plan
Scale: 1:300

WAYMARK

www.waymarkarchitecture.com
1826 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4N5

No.	Date	Appr	Revision Notes

No.	Date	Issue Notes

IMPORTANT: This drawing is not to be used for construction until issued for that purpose by the Architect.

Prior to commencement of the Work, the Contractor shall review and verify drawing dimensions, datums, and levels to identify all descrepancies between information on this drawing and 1) actual site conditions; and 2) the remaining Contract Documents. The Contractor shall bring these items to the attention of the Archtiect for clarification before proceeding with the Work.

Seal:

Owner:

Project Title:
539-545 1/2 Fisgard Street - BP1

Sheet Title:
HAP Elevations

Scale: n/a

Architect of Record: Will King

Drawn by: WK, KT, CL

Reviewed by: GMV

Project ID: 2019-005

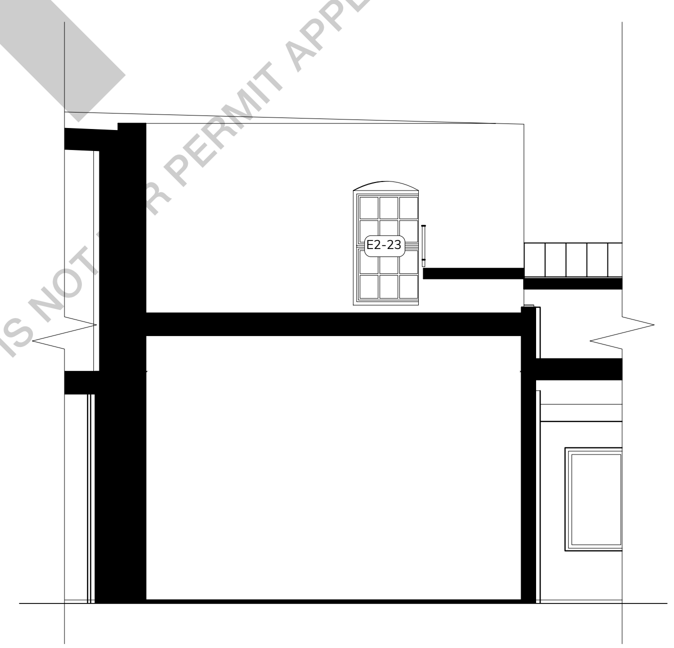
Sheet Number: HAP004

1 South Elevation
Scale: 1:50

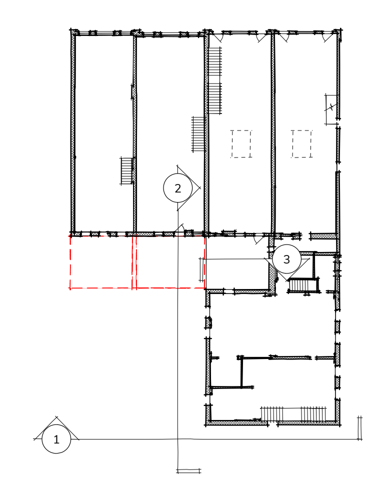
6 Door
Scale: N/A

7 Window
Scale: N/A

2 West Elevation
Scale: 1:50



3 North Elevation (2)
Scale: 1:50



4 Key Plan
Scale: 1:300

WAYMARK

www.waymarkarchitecture.com
1826 Government Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4N5

No.	Date	Appr	Revision Notes

No.	Date	Issue Notes

IMPORTANT: This drawing is not to be used for construction until issued for that purpose by the Architect.

Prior to commencement of the Work, the Contractor shall review and verify drawing dimensions, datums, and levels to identify all descrepancies between information on this drawing and 1) actual site conditions; and 2) the remaining Contract Documents. The Contractor shall bring these items to the attention of the Archtiect for clarification before proceeding with the Work.

Seal

Owner:

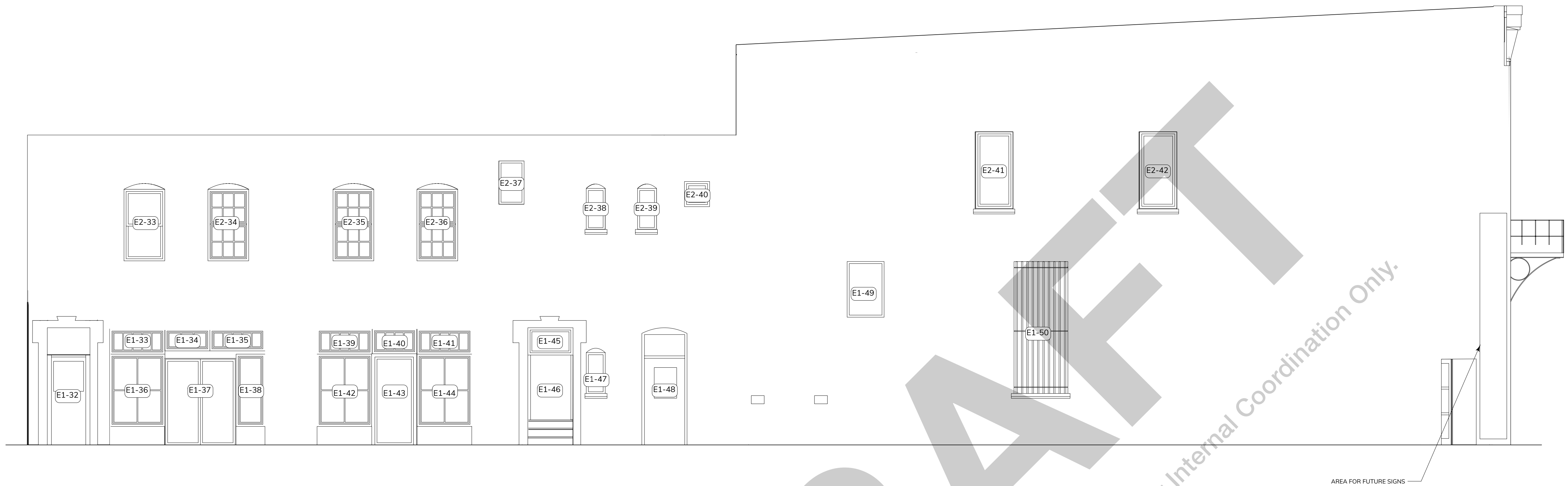
Project Title:
539-545 1/2 Fisgard Street - BP1

Sheet Title:
HAP Elevations

Scale: n/a
Architect of Record: Will King
Drawn by: WK, KT, CL
Reviewed by GMV
Project ID: 2019-005

Sheet Number:
HAP005

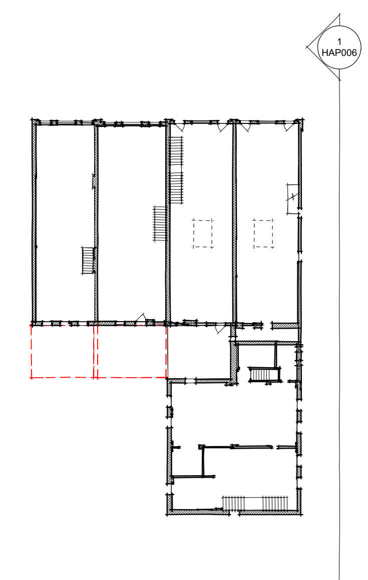
WAYMARK



1 East Elevation
Scale: 1:50

3 Door
Scale: N/A

4 Window
Scale: N/A



2 Key Plan
Scale: 1:300

WAYMARK

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Victoria, BC V8T 4N5

No.	Date	Appr	Revision Notes

No.	Date	Issue Notes

IMPORTANT: This drawing is not to be used for construction until issued for that purpose by the Architect.

Prior to commencement of the Work, the Contractor shall review and verify drawing dimensions, datums, and levels to identify all descrepancies between information on this drawing and 1) actual site conditions; and 2) the remaining Contract Documents. The Contractor shall bring these items to the attention of the Archtiect for clarification before proceeding with the Work.

Seal

Owner:

Project Title:
539-545 1/2 Fisgard Street - BP1

Sheet Title:
HAP Elevations

Scale: n/a
Architect of Record: Will King
Drawn by: WK, KT, CL
Reviewed by: GMV
Project ID: 2019-005
Sheet Number: HAP006

WAYMARK