

Re:

Committee of the Whole Meeting – September 23, 2021

We note that Item E.1 of the Agenda refers to a Heritage Alteration Permit for 539 – 545 ½ Fisgard Street and 16-20 Fan Tan Alley.

As stated in the staff report in an unequivocal and unambiguous manner this project meets the City-adopted Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

We wish to draw your attention to the differences between the strong staff support for this project and that for the recently approved Northern Junk Buildings at 1314 – 1318 Wharf Street where heritage preservation took a backseat to increased density and amenity provisions.

How is it that one proposal can rehabilitate a historic cluster without burying the City's precious assets while another insists that they require rezoning and increased height and density provisions?

As the crow flies, the two clusters are only 900 feet apart. Each represents important facets of the City's history. For many years one was unused; not abandoned, just unused. Many parts of the other were also unused for many years until careful rehabilitation took place over the past 20 to 30 years.

We could have done better as regards the Northern Junk buildings. Some will think they have 'saved' the historic buildings, but there was no threat other than neglect by the owner, nothing to save them from. Sensitive rehabilitation could have created a valuable and long-lasting addition to the ambiance of Old Town Victoria. Remember, Old Town Victoria is our Innovation Hub for tourism.

We support moving the request for approval of the Heritage Alteration Permit forward and ask that, when other proposals for new buildings or alterations to existing buildings in Old Town come forward, you look back at this proposal and consider what can be done.

Thank You,

Ken Johnson  
President  
Hallmark Heritage Society