



## Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of September 5, 2024

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**To:** Committee of the Whole **Date:** August 29, 2024  
**From:** Karen Hoese, Director, Planning and Development  
**Subject:** Heritage Designation Application No.000210 for 1601 Douglas Street

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. approve the designation of the property located at 1601 Douglas Street pursuant to Section 611 of the *Local Government Act*, as a Municipal Heritage Site
2. direct staff to prepare the Heritage Designation Bylaw for introductory readings at a subsequent meeting and a Public Hearing date be set.

### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

In accordance with Section 611 of the *Local Government Act*, Council may designate real property, in whole or in part, as protected property.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Council with information, analysis and recommendations regarding an owner request to heritage designate the exterior of the building located at 1601 Douglas Street. The three-storey commercial building was built in 1912 and contributes to the historic character of Victoria's downtown core.

The designation of this building is generally consistent with Section 8: "Placemaking (Urban Design and Heritage)" of the *Official Community Plan (2012)*, with Section 7, "Heritage" of the *Downtown Core Area Plan*, and with the *Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework*.

The application was reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Panel at its June 27, 2024 meeting and it was recommended that Council consider approving the designation of the (heritage-registered) property located at 1601 Douglas Street.

## BACKGROUND

### Description of Proposal

The property located at 1601 Douglas, also referred to as the Fairfield Block, is a three-storey masonry building, built in 1912. The exterior façades have maintained much of their original appearance. Its character-defining elements include:

- prominent corner location
- commercial massing and large floor plate
- the relationship and sense of continuity with other historic commercial buildings in the area, such as the Hudson's Bay Company Department Store and the Hotel Douglas
- commercial use of the building, in particular the variety of storefronts at street level
- commercial style architectural elements relevant to its 1912 construction, including the tan brick cladding, terra cotta decorative elements, prominent cornice, and grid-like fenestration pattern
- the paired double-hung wooden sash windows in the upper storeys
- interior elements which support the heritage character of its original design by architect Henry S. Griffith
- construction methods used in its 1912 design
- the integrity of the building envelope, which identifies it as a 1912 commercial building.
- the “SALLY’S” signs on the southern end of the Douglas Street façade and in the pavement of the entrance to the southernmost commercial unit.

The property is also valued for being one of the few surviving building examples of architect H.S. Griffith and is representative of the substantial real estate speculation associated with commercial wealth that occurred in Victoria during the boom period between 1908 and 1913.



Figure 1. 1601-1605 Douglas Street, Fairfield Block. Date between 1959-1974. City of Victoria Archives

### Condition/Economic Viability

The building is in fair to good condition.

## ANALYSIS

The following sections provide a summary of the application's consistency with the relevant City policies and guidelines.

### Official Community Plan

The designation of this building is consistent with the *Official Community Plan* (OCP, 2012), which in the section entitled "Placemaking (Urban Design and Heritage)", states:

#### Goals

8 (B) *Victoria's cultural and natural heritage resources are protected and celebrated.*

#### Broad Objectives

8 (j) *That heritage property is conserved as resources with value for present and future generations.*

8 (l) *That heritage and cultural values are identified, celebrated, and retained through community engagement.*

#### City Form

8.6 *Conserve and enhance the heritage value, character and special features of areas, districts, streetscapes, cultural landscapes and individual properties throughout the city.*

8.11 *Determine the heritage value of areas, districts, streetscapes, cultural landscape and individual properties using the Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework as identified in Figure 12.*

#### Buildings and Sites

8.51 *Continue to give consideration to tools available under legislation to protect or conserve heritage property including, but not limited to: heritage designation bylaws; listing on the heritage register; temporary protection; heritage alteration permits; heritage revitalization agreements; design guidelines; and, the protection of views of heritage landmark buildings from public vantage points as identified in Map 8, and to be determined in future local area plans.*

8.54 *Continue to work with senior government, community and business partners to identify, protect and conserve property of heritage value.*

### Downtown Core Area Plan

The designation of the building is consistent with Section 7: "Heritage" of the *Downtown Core Area Plan 2011* which states:

#### Heritage - Objectives

1 *Retain, protect and improve real property with aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual value and heritage character as a benefit to the public.*

#### Areas and Districts - Policies and Actions

7.3. *Conserve heritage values of the Downtown Core Area and its character-defining elements, such as individual buildings, collections of buildings, streetscapes, structures and features.*

Buildings and Sites - Policies and Actions

- 7.20. Continue to work with the private sector to identify, protect and conserve property and areas with heritage value in the Downtown Core Area.
- 7.28. Produce and update, as required, Statements of Significance for properties listed on the Heritage Register in the Downtown Core Area.

**Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework**

A key City policy includes the determination of heritage value using a city-wide thematic framework (OCP Fig. 12) incorporated into the OCP to identify the key civic historic themes. The *Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework* functions to organize and define historical events, to identify representative historic places, and to place sites, persons and events in an overall context. The thematic framework recognizes a broad range of values under which City-wide themes can be articulated. A Heritage Value assessment with consideration of the *Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework* is incorporated into the updated Statement of Significance.

**Statement of Significance**

A Statement of Significance describing the historic place, its attributes, and history is attached to this report.

**Heritage Advisory Panel**

The application was reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Panel at its June 27, 2024 meeting and was recommended for approval.

**Resource Impacts**

To be eligible for heritage incentives and grants for conservation work, the building must be heritage designated.

**CONCLUSIONS**

This application for the heritage designation of the property located at 1601 Douglas Street as a Municipal Heritage Site is for a building that is a good example of Victoria’s commercial development from the twentieth century. It is therefore recommended that Council consider approving the Heritage Designation Application for the heritage-registered building located at 1601 Douglas Street.

**ALTERNATE MOTION**

That Council decline Heritage Designation Application No. 000210 for the property located at 1601 Douglas.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristal Stevenot  
Senior Heritage Planner  
Development Services Division

Karen Hoese, Director  
Planning and Development  
Development Department

**Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager.**

## List of Attachments

- Attachment A: Subject Map
- Attachment B: Aerial Map
- Attachment C: Photographs
- Attachment D: Statement of Significance
- Attachment E: Letter from the applicant, date stamped May 3, 2024.