

October 27, 2017
Mayor and Council

Re: 60 Day Temporary Protection Order, 1525 Shasta Place

Dear Mayor and Council:

In the OCP, Rockland is described as

- Primarily a historic residential neighbourhood with ground oriented housing (21.23.1) and
- An area of notable historic architectural and landscape character (21.23.2).

The Strategic Direction for Rockland is to

- Continue to conserve the historic architectural and landscape character of the neighbourhood (21.24.4).

In reality, however, it is clear that the level of protection afforded buildings with significant heritage and heritage merit in Victoria is deficient. Any current discussions of heritage values and heritage protection pay only lip service to the issue.

If Council supports the demolition of 1525 Shasta Place, with its historical attributes, it will be abundantly evident that Victoria continues to have no appetite either to develop rigorous, protective by-laws or to invest monetarily in preserving our heritage. In the end, the only security we can hope for is the goodwill of owners, which is not enough if we wish to safeguard an interesting, historical city both for our citizens and for international visitors.

The Hallmark Heritage Society has written to say that they “do not condone the demolition of historic buildings,” but that in this case “demolition is inevitable.” The RNA is very disappointed that “proper documentation” is the best that can be hoped for in the manifest climate of disregard for the worthiness of our neighbourhood, which makes a farce of the values in the OCP.

If Rockland is deprived of one of its heritage-registered treasures, it is unreasonable to expect us to support any variances to the proposed new residence, or a rezoning to accommodate an oversized garden suite. Garden suite by-laws were only recently relaxed; the promise to recycle materials from a building willfully demolished is not sufficient to justify rezoning to allow an oversized garden suite.

Sincerely,
Janet Simpson, President