



Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan: Areas Being Explored for Heritage Conservation Areas Engagement Summary June 2017

Background

Through the development of the Fairfield neighbourhood plan, the community told us that heritage and historic areas are important to the fabric and character of the community. Four areas were identified as having special heritage value due to the high concentration of historic homes, unique historic architectural styles and homes in good condition: Cook Street and Dallas Road, Trutch Street, Durban Street and Kipling Street; and Memorial Crescent.

Visit victoria.ca/fairfield to read more about Heritage Conservation Areas and a description of these areas.

Engagement Activities

The purpose of engagement was to hear from property owners and general public about the potential for Heritage Conservation Areas in the four areas. The following engagement opportunities were held:

- 2 Homeowner meetings (46 participants)
- Email and phone correspondence from homeowners (22)
- Community survey (773 responses)
- 2 Community information sessions (100 + attendees)



Summary of Feedback from Homeowners in Areas Being Explored for HCAs

The workshops and email correspondence from homeowners was very mixed. Some homeowners saw a lot of benefit to the establishment of HCAs, while others had significant concerns and were strongly opposed.

Key Benefits Identified by Homeowners:

- a way to guard against inappropriate development
- retaining the historical character of the area

Key Concerns:

- potential negative impact on property values
- infringement on property rights
- lack of certainty about when a permit would be required
- increased time and costs to upgrade properties
- lack of homeowner choice to be included in an HCA
- inappropriate boundaries for the proposed areas (design restrictions on only a limited area)
- inability for sustainable retrofits such as solar roof tiles
- Heritage Conservation Areas are not the only tool to encourage heritage values

While there was some level of support within each Heritage Conservation Area, the strongest support was on Memorial Crescent and Trutch Street. Conversely, the highest levels of opposition by homeowners was on Durban/Kipling Street, Cook Street and Dallas Road. Within the Durban/Kipling area, owners on Kipling Street were generally more supportive than owners on Durban Street.

The notes from homeowner meetings are included following the summary. The redacted email correspondence from homeowners is attached.

Summary of Feedback from the Broader Community

Through the online survey and at the information sessions, the neighbourhood was strongly supportive of the establishment of heritage conservation areas demonstrated by the survey results:

- 87% support for Cook Street and Dallas Road
- 86% support for Trutch Street
- 81% support for Durban and Kipling Streets
- 77% support for Memorial Crescent

A total of 90 property owners in the areas responded to the survey question about Heritage Conservation Areas (total 583 responses).



Read the survey results, notes from information session, notes from homeowner workshops and feedback emails at victoria.ca/fairfield.

Detailed Feedback by Area: HCA Homeowner Workshops

Homeowners in those areas were invited to participate in two workshops to explore what it would mean to be included in a heritage conservation area. Following a presentation about heritage conservation areas, homeowners were seated at tables with their neighbours and guided through a facilitated discussion.

Read the full notes from those meetings on the following pages.

Homeowner Workshop #1:
Wednesday, April 26, Fairfield Gonzales Community Association
30 participants

Table 1: Homeowners from Cook Street, Dallas Road and Memorial Crescent

What do you like about the idea of establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in this area?

- Heritage designation of specific sites okay – If owner wants it
- Not opposed to HCA on Memorial Crescent because houses already on register or designated
- Comfort that establishing an HCA may prevent flat roofs and result in more appropriate form
- Not against it – It's a lovely area, like the different architectural styles

What are your concerns about establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in this area?

- Maintain value – concern about loss of value
- Concern over losing control of property X3 speakers
- Concern about dealing with City Hall processes
- Concern about property values
- Don't support HCA on entire street (Cook) – don't want it imposed – 2 speakers
- Don't want restrictions when selling
- Concerned it will affect resale value (reduce)
- Concern won't sell for maximum value
- Doesn't seem fair; concerned about red tape
- It's too late

What other questions or comments do you have?

- Concern it's City Hall driven
- Faithful Street may have value – why small pockets singled out?
- Nice for tourists
- Consider other heritage tools rather than capturing everybody
- No incentives for property owners in the HCA
- Concerned about the recent city decisions e.g. (bikes lanes, Clover point etc.)

Table 2: Homeowners from Trutch Avenue

What do you like about the idea of establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in this area?

- Like the idea of protecting the whole street (has a designated house)
- Would like to avoid incongruous developments e.g. (Ross Bay Villa)
- Likes idea of new development fitting in with existing surroundings
- See examples of developments that don't fit in e.g. on Linden Avenue on alley
- Opportunity to conserve what's there
- Opportunity to recognize this area e.g. (PEI & Oak Bay) – Interpretive sign
- Extend to Collinson as this was the driveway

What are your concerns about establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in this area?

- Designated homeowner would like to remove designation if HCA established to reduce requirements
- Cost is a concern especially loss of value
- Property owner in non-designated house ok with rebuilding to fit in with neighborhood
- Property owner gutted inside, retained exterior
- Desire for compensation

What other questions or comments do you have?

- Include Collinson (Original driveway to Trutch)
- Signage for heritage house (designated houses)
- People confuse designation with HCA
- Trutch has many renters
- Likes the contrast between different area's
- Keep Trutch as the name (part of the history)
- B+B on the block, Owner lives in another house on Trutch

Table 3: Homeowners from Kipling Avenue**What do you like about the idea of establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in this area?**

- Ensures new development fits with streets heritage character
- Interesting idea, history is important
- Sets parameters for developers
- Could help keep neighborhood feel that's attracts people to the neighborhood
- Provides stability for someone looking to invest in the area

What are your concerns about establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in these areas?

- How can we still allow for sustainable retrofits - E.g. solar roof tiles
- How far does the designation extend? (landscaping, windows)
- Expense with sourcing "heritage" style replacement/upgrade materials E.g. (windows)
- This approach is too fine grained and will effect property values of redevelopment sites
HCA should cover larger area (neighborhood)
- Heritage should be part of DP process
- Many other streets in Fairfield that have heritage value (B/W Cook St. Village & Kipling)
Should be 4-5 blocks at a time
- Approval times

What other questions or comments do you have?

- Like that won't require approval for paint
- Gonzales deserves large HCA
- Would garden suites be subject to HCA approval process?
- Demolition is impacting neighboring property
- Who decides what's included and what's out of the HCA

- Could the HCA be removed?
- Significant houses along Linden
- Why aren't we engaging owners of significant heritage properties to encourage designation
- City should take active approach to heritage designation

Table 4: Homeowners from Durban Street

What do you like about the idea of establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in this area?

- Want to keep the flavour of the area and protect the values

What are your concerns about establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in these areas?

- Strongly opposed
- Concerned about loss of freedom They have survived this long because homeowners take care of them
- Intrusion into private property rights
- Property value – Realtor/appraisals go down
- Heritage contractors are expensive
- What is the process?
- A lot of change in the area – vulnerability of small homes
- Very modern redevelopment currently occurring
- Limitations on upgrading old homes
- Loss of investment
- Don't want to stop progress
- Need Housing for families
- Younger generation doesn't want heritage
- Don't want other people deciding for us
- Increased traffic
- Government intrusion

What other questions or comments do you have?

- Can it be revoked?
- Consider other approaches to managing heritage
- Durban- services are shallow
- Incentives for upgrades (What will make people want to keep it)
- Do homeowners have a higher level of influence?

Homeowner Workshop #2:

Wednesday, May 3, Parkside Hotel & Spa

16 participants

Table 1: Homeowners from Trutch and Memorial Crescent

What do you like about the idea of establishing an HCA in this area?

- Retain historical character
- Appreciate the look of old and new homes when done with respect to each other
- Love the look and feel. Treescapes, activities like horse carriage tours, tourist based economy in Victoria
- In favor, would appreciate flexibility to make changes
- Appreciate the look and feel, appreciate standards to respect the context
- Regulations for large buildings

What are your concerns about establishing an HCA in this area?

- Later to address demolition of older homes
- Increased waiting times, possible increase in cost for renovations
- Insurance covering an older home not worth it to insure.
- Not enough choice when changing roof lines/chimneys
- City of Victoria + public benefitting + the homeowners should be appropriately compensated for these benefits with grants
- Increased cost in maintaining heritage buildings, HCA then passes on costs and responsibilities to owners
- Regulation adding up over time
- Effects on sale price and changes for an apartment building, May dissuade future buyers or developers
- Will there be minimum standards to maintain these buildings?

What other questions or comments do you have?

- Would HCA restrict rezoning?
- Bioswales
- Hydro lines, should they be buried?

Table 2: Homeowners from Cook Street, Dallas Road and Durban Street

What do you like about the idea of establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in these areas?

- Potential for exclusivity – Property values rise
- Tourism opportunities do to curb appeal (prettiness factor)
- Enhances Victoria as whole, better place to live
- Value heritage (but not sure about tool)
- Enhances livability for residents that are already there
- Likes the potential for preservation of old houses on the block (once they are gone they're gone)
- Conserves an area rather than individual

What are your concerns about establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in these areas?

- Concern about additional level of permission required, especially for new homeowners, tight margins, don't want to create risks on investment
- Impact on property values for existing homeowners

- Lack of freedom to make changes that we want and steps involved (bureaucracy)
- Lack of certainty for homeowners, regulations could become tighter in the future.
- Concern about impact for property value for anything with heritage requirements
- Deterrent to buyers who may not be interested (potential buyers)
- More restrictions than the rest of the city (concern)
- Concern that heritage area with restrict change and natural evolution / diversity of the area (it has been changing for the last 110 years)
- Long term regulations (who knows what the future brings)
- Impact on property rights, removing freedom
- Owners / residents need change over time
- Restrictions on future additions / renovations to adapt house over time + perceived process
- Concern about putting neighbors against neighbors using rules to control / potential for tension
- What is the value added if there are already designated properties?

What other questions or comments do you have?

- Is this the right tool?
- Why are non-historic houses included?
- Other ways to incentivize heritage
- Added density
- Different weight to homeowner / general public
- Very complex now
- Restriction: uncertainty about what is controlled or not – windows (yes or no?)
- No financial compensation for extra costs due to heritage standard
- Concern that same umbrella is applied to the whole area when it is a mix of 1930's, 1950's, 1970's Etc.
- Very complex now – What about the future
- Uncertainty about what can – can't be done
- Requirements the same for designation without access to financial compensation
- Concern about impact for retirement investment
- HCA should be up to the individual property owners
- Concern that survey questions don't allow for general ideas
- Concern about understanding the next steps
- Concern that initial exploration of Cook St. was made by a neighbor
- Durban has been maintained / improved without regulation
- These are new terms not the ones that a property was bought under (individual decision)
- Incentivizing
- Broaden suggestion to all of Fairfield
- Personal choice, diversity is good

Table 3: Homeowners from Kipling Street

What do you like about the idea of establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in these areas?

What do you like about the idea of establishing an HCA in this area?

- Keeping heritage and houses
- Like heritage
- Manage development in a way that respects character
- Attracts tourism (walkers, Horse carriages)
- Creates community
- Welcoming
- Kipling – Designed for interaction (front porch/ small lots)
- Safe area for kids
- Better tool for the area rather than individual designation

What are your concerns about establishing a Heritage Conservation Area in these areas?

- Property Values
- Restrictions on changes

What other questions or comments do you have?

- Can just Kipling be an HCA
- Very supportive
- Concerns about childcare proposal at Kipling & Thurlow (Scale of it)
- Supportive of traffic calming measures on Kipling

Detailed Feedback: Email Correspondence from Homeowners in Areas Being Explored for HCAs

Several homeowners provided written feedback to City Council or City Staff regarding Heritage Conservation Areas. The redacted emails are available on the webpage.

Detailed Feedback: Survey Report

The broader community was invited to provide feedback on neighbourhood growth, housing types and heritage conservation through an on-line survey. 773 surveys were completed. The Heritage Conservation Area survey report is available on the webpage.

Detailed Feedback: Information Sessions

The broader community was invited to provide feedback on neighbourhood growth, housing types and heritage conservation at two information sessions April 28 and May 2. Approximately 100 people attended the events. Participants were provided with an introduction to Heritage Conservation Areas and the four areas being explored in Fairfield, and were asked to provide their feedback.

Community Information Sessions #1 and #2:
Tuesday, April 28, Cook Street Activity Centre
Saturday, May 2, Parkside Hotel
Approximately 100 participants total

Please identify which areas you think should be heritage conservation areas (use sticky dots to tell us)

Area 1. Cook Street (south of May St.) and Dallas Rd. (between Cook St. and Marlborough Street)

13 votes

Area 2. Trutch Street (between Richardson St. and Fairfield Rd.)

14 votes

Area 3. Durban Street and Kipling Street (between Carnsew Street/Richardson Street and Thurlow Rd)

8 votes

Area 4. Memorial Crescent (between May Street and Fairfield Rd)

9 votes

Use sticky notes to tell us why:

- I am willing to share costs associated with home owners who get designated a heritage area
- Let's make our city Victoria even more B-E-A-U-T-I-F-U-L through planning, making and of course maintain peaceful and visually appealing neighborhoods with less vehicles; an efficient Translink – This is the time.
- Cook St. Village in particular & the Fairfield area in general has many interesting character homes and limiting their destruction to small areas is terrible!
- Perfect example of Victoria (and Fairfield) building unattractive box houses is (now in 2017) at the corner of St. Patrick's Street and beach Drive an old house was removed first and barged away. What a shame. The new house on that semi-oceanfront is so ugly that it begs for a makeover already. This is not what visitors or Victorians deserve, so please do not allow this type of building to proliferate.
- Heritage areas make our city amazingly unique, please preserve.
- Excellent display and descriptions, I like the variation and the area density
- Let's inform the world of what we're doing once we get it set up – online self-guided walks that people can download, plaques, Etc. Victoria is beautiful & we are happy to share our unique amenities with locals & visitors.
- Make all of Fairfield a heritage area. No more modern homes it ruins the flavor of the neighborhood
- The south side of the 1100 block of Burdett should be looked at as a transitional zone of traditional houses. To protect this area future proposed developments should honor the context of the street. There are three character houses that a developer wants to replace with a 36 unit apartment building. This would ruin the street. An 18 unit townhouse complex would be more supportive of family life and neighborhood living.
- More areas should be considered as conservation areas, please save more heritage homes and areas.