



Planning and Land Use Committee Report

For the Meeting of May 14, 2015

To: Planning and Land Use Committee **Date:** April 22, 2015
From: Murray G. Miller, Senior Heritage Planner, Community Planning
Subject: Heritage Designation Application #000144 for 624 Battery Street

RECOMMENDATION

That Council consider the designation of the property located at 624 Battery Street pursuant to Section 967 of the *Local Government Act* as a Municipal Heritage Site.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

In accordance with section 967 of the *Local Government Act*, Council may, by bylaw, on terms and conditions it considers appropriate, designate real property in whole or in part as protected if Council considers that the property has heritage value or heritage character or that the designation of the property is necessary or desirable for the conservation of a protected heritage property.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present Council with information, analysis and recommendations regarding an owner request to designate the house located at 624 Battery Street which is within the Battery Street Heritage Conservation Area. The property is not on the City of Victoria's Register of Heritage Properties.

The following points were considered in assessing this application:

- general consistency with the *Official Community Plan (OCP)*
- Statement of Significance
- Victoria's Heritage Thematic Framework.

The application was reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Panel at its April 14, 2015 meeting and was recommended for approval. This report fulfils the requirements of Section 968(5) of the *Local Government Act*.

BACKGROUND

Description of Proposal

An application to designate the house located at 624 Battery Street as a Municipal Heritage Site was received from the owners on February 18, 2015.

Zoning/Land Use

The proposed designation is consistent with the R-2: Two Family Dwelling District Zone and the predominant surrounding land uses.

Condition/Economic Viability

The exterior of the building, as viewed from Battery Street and as depicted in recent photographs, appears to be in sound condition.

ANALYSIS

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

Official Community Plan

This application is consistent with the OCP because it contributes to the goal of protecting and celebrating Victoria's cultural and natural heritage resources. In addition, a key strategic direction of James Bay would be met by the designation of the property as a Municipal Heritage Site because it would maintain an existing character area.

Statement of Significance

A Statement of Significance describing the historic place, outlining its heritage value and identifying its character-defining elements is attached to this report.

Victoria's Heritage Thematic Framework

A key policy of the OCP includes the determination of heritage value using a values-based approach. A Heritage Value Assessment with consideration of Victoria's Heritage Thematic Framework is incorporated into the Statement of Significance.

Resource Impacts

The applicant has indicated their interest in restoring the exterior appearance of the property; as a result, there may be a request in the future for a grant from the Victoria Heritage Foundation.

CONCLUSIONS

The house located at 624 Battery Street is a contributor to the Battery Street Heritage Conservation Area as outlined in the Statement of Significance. The application for designation of the building as a Municipal Heritage Site is consistent with relevant City policies and will serve to strengthen the Battery Street Heritage Conservation Area. Staff therefore recommend that Council consider the designation of the property located at 624 Battery Street.

ALTERNATE MOTION

That Council decline Heritage Designation Application No. 000144 for the property located at 624 Battery Street.

Respectfully submitted,



Murray G. Miller
Senior Heritage Planner
Community Planning



Andrea Hudson
Assistant Director, Community Planning
Sustainable Planning and Community Development

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager: _____



Jason Johnson

Date: _____

May 5, 2015

MGM/ljm

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List of Attachments

- Subject map
- Aerial map
- Photographs
- Statement of Significance
- Letter from the owner, date stamped February 18, 2015
- Excerpt from *This Old House, Volume Two (Draft): James Bay*.



Heritage Designation #000144





624 BATTERY STREET



624 BATTERY STREET



624 BATTERY STREET



624 BATTERY STREET



Statement of Significance

624 Battery St, Victoria, British Columbia
Lot 18, Blocks 3, 4 & 5, Beckley Farm, Victoria

Description of the Historic Place

624 Battery Street is a two-storey Edwardian single-family home with six rooms built in 1910. It is located in the core of the Battery Street Heritage Conservation Area, on the southern edge of Victoria's James Bay peninsula. On the north side of the street facing south, it is centered on a lot of 50' x 100' (595.4 sq.m.).

The front façade has a heavy belt course defining the two floors. The main floor has a single-storey box bay on the left and a shallow recessed porch on the right. Original double-hung sashes survive on the sides and rear. Front-facing steps with low bannisters lead to the porch with original concave brackets on plain square columns. The original front door has half-length side-lights with later glass.

The hipped roof is bellcast, with wide, closed eaves, and is dominated by two original corbelled chimneys. The building stands on a concrete foundation, parged to resemble stone blocks. The Foursquare footprint is modified by a two-storey rear extension, offset on the left side, also with a bellcast roof.

The house is within and protected by Heritage Conservation Area No. 2. (See Map 676, p.243, Appendix A, Victoria Official Community Plan.) The HCA comprises more than two dozen houses, primarily built in the pre-war building boom of 1903-13, but anchored by the unique 1889 mansion "Pinehurst" (617 Battery St). Number 624 Battery plays an important role in a streetscape of largely intact homes on the north side of the three-block street.

Heritage Value of the Historic Place

The heritage value of 624 Battery Street is summarized below in accordance with the Victoria Heritage Thematic Framework established in the Official Community Plan.

Theme 1: COASTAL SETTLEMENT

Thematic Framework Subtheme 1.3: Pioneer Farms to First Suburbs

624 Battery Street's location on the historic Beckley Farm is significant to the evolution of the neighbourhood of James Bay, from farm land to residential lots, and reflects the boom years of growth in Victoria prior to WWI. It is representative of the important shift in James Bay from Beckley Farm holdings to the development of a neighbourhood.

The house plays an important role in the Heritage Conservation Area No. 2. The HCA, anchored by the lavish mansion "Pinehurst," demonstrates the evolution of early Victorian estates, and features an entire street. It reflects the optimism and prosperity of Victorians in the decade before WWI. The street is one block from the ocean and terminates at Beacon Hill Park, Victoria's primary sporting and social gathering place.

Theme 2: GATEWAY ECONOMY

Thematic Framework Subtheme 2.5: Historic Infrastructure

624 Battery Street's proximity to the historic downtown core and three major transit corridors (Niagara, Government and Douglas Street) is valued as indicative of the development of neighbourhoods around developing infrastructure.

Theme 5: CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Thematic Framework Subtheme 5.1: Architectural Expression

The house has value as an example of Edwardian architecture and for its association with architect J.C.M. Keith (Keith & Evers 1891-1930), who became one of Victoria's preeminent designers through the 1890s and 1920s. Keith made a major and lasting contribution to the city's architecture, designing many Victoria residences, primarily in the Tudor Revival or Arts & Crafts styles, notably the imposing Ryan residence, at 651 Battery (1912), as well as prominent public buildings, including the Pemberton Chapel and Christ Church Cathedral. A number of his residential commissions were for 1½-storey homes, with half-timbering in the gables. This house, in the Foursquare style, and covered with shingles, breaks with this tradition and is valued as a rare design form by this significant architect.

Finally, this building has heritage value owing to its physical integrity as expressed through its character-defining elements.

Character-Defining Elements

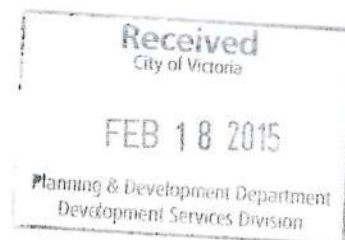
Key elements that express the heritage value of 624 Battery Street and that continue to define the character and history of James Bay include:

- Original location of building on Beckley Farm
- Relationship to surrounding residential buildings dating from the early twentieth century and the contribution that the building adds to the neighbourhood (Heritage Conservation Area #2).
- A rare design form by prominent architect J.C.M. Keith.

Key elements that define the heritage character of the building's exterior include:

- Edwardian Foursquare style;
- Bellcast roof with wide, closed, eaves;
- Two corbelled chimneys;
- Angled bay on the left side;
- Box bay on the front;
- A heavy belt course on the front façade, defining the two floors;
- Shallow, recessed porch on the right front;
- Four concave brackets on the porch columns;
- Front-facing steps with low bannisters leading to the porch;
- Period front door with half-length sidelights;
- Arts & Crafts-style shingles on all wall surfaces;
- Double-hung sash windows on each side and the rear.

624 Battery Street
Victoria BC V8V 1E5



February 16, 2015

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor Helps and Council

Please find attached the Application for Heritage Designation of our home at 624 Battery Street, plus photos and supplementary material.

Battery Street is part of the James Bay Heritage Conservation Area HCA 1, Traditional Residential, for the purpose of heritage conservation (*City of Victoria Official Community Plan*, Appendix A, Development Permit Areas and Heritage Conservation Areas). Many of the neighbouring homes on Battery Street have been heritage designated and the street is recognized for its unique historic character.

The architect of our home was John Charles Malcolm Keith, architect for Christ Church Cathedral and other prominent Victoria buildings including the nearby residence at 651 Battery Street, and the First Presbyterian Church at 932/934 Balmoral Road. The other home we own, at 1042 Princess Avenue, was coincidentally also designed by J.C.M. Keith and received heritage designation in 2000.

The plans for the construction of 624 Battery Street were prepared for Ralph Switzer, retired. He is listed as the resident of the home in 1911 and we believe retained the property as a rental until the 1930s. Thomas Gallon, of Roberts Beasley & Gallon Ltd., lived in the home from 1912-1914 followed by Cornelius H. O'Halloran, who went on to form the View Street law firm Hall & O'Halloran, from 1915-1917. Henri Parizeau, head of the Canadian Hydrographic Survey, lived in the home during the late 1920s. *This Old House: V2 James Bay* outlines the history of many of the other historical properties on Battery Street.

Our home was a rental property for many years and has lost some of its original heritage features, including the street-facing original windows. We are interested in restoring the heritage appearance of the exterior of the home, as well as repainting in heritage-appropriate colours. We have been gradually restoring the interior of the home, which retains some of the original woodwork despite the negative impact of 1970s renovations.

Thank you for considering our application. We would be happy to provide additional information upon request.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melanie Groves'.

Melanie Groves
Owners

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jen Kyffin'.

Jen Kyffin

624 Battery Street
Built: 1910

For: Ralph Switzer
Architect: J.C.M. Keith



624 Battery Street, 2015

VHF / Nick Russell

624 Battery Street is a two-storey Edwardian single-family home with six rooms built in 1910 for \$3,400. The front façade has a heavy belt course defining the two floors. The main floor has a single-storey box bay on the left and a shallow recessed porch on the right. Original double-hung sashes survive on the sides and rear. Front-facing steps with low bannisters lead to the porch with original concave brackets on plain square columns. The original front door has half-length side-lights with later glass.

The hipped roof is bellcast, with wide, closed eaves, and is dominated by two original corbelled chimneys. The building stands on a concrete foundation, parged to resemble stone blocks. The Foursquare footprint is modified by a two-storey rear extension, offset on the left side, also with a bellcast roof.

The house is within and protected by Battery Street Heritage Conservation Area No. 2. The HCA comprises more than two dozen houses, primarily built in the pre-war building boom of 1903-13, but anchored by the unique 1889 mansion "Pinehurst" (617 Battery St). Number 624 Battery plays an important role in a streetscape of largely intact homes on the north side of the three-block street.

The house has value as an example of Edwardian architecture and for its association with architect J.C.M. Keith (Keith & Evers 1891-1930), who became one of



624 Battery St, 1970s

Hallmark Heritage Society Archives

Victoria's preeminent designers through the 1890s and 1920s. Keith made a major and lasting contribution to the city's architecture, designing many Victoria residences, primarily in the Tudor Revival or Arts & Crafts styles, notably the imposing Ryan residence, at 651 Battery (1912), as well as prominent public buildings, including the Pemberton Chapel and Christ

Church Cathedral. A number of his residential commissions were for 1½-storey homes, with half-timbering in the gables. This house, in the Foursquare style, and covered with shingles, breaks with this tradition and is valued as a rare design form by this significant architect.

1910-1911: The house was built for Ralph Switzer (b. Co. Limerick, IRL, 1834-1911). He immigrated to the US in 1885. The 1900 US Census shows Ralph Switzer, widower, residing in Oregon. His occupation is listed as "capitalist". In 1908 Mary Murray (b. Co. Galway, IRL, 1876-1957) and Ralph Switzer were married in Vancouver. Mary was 32 and Ralph was 73. He died a year after moving to 624 Battery St.

1912-1951: Widow Mary Switzer continued to own the house until the early 1950s. For most of those years the house was rented out to others. In the later years Mary resided at the Devonshire House Rooms in the 700 block Fort Street.