

Bastion gateway snags poor reviews

By Carla Wilson
Times-Colonist staff

Neighboring merchants are turning thumbs down to the new green-colored gateway to Bastion Square.

"I get a lot of customers coming in and saying what an ugly monster it is," Phyllis Linklater, Breeze Clothing Ltd. owner, said this week.

"I don't think it looks right. I think it is out of proportion."

Her heritage robin's-egg-blue Government Street building stands on one side of the gate, which has four pillars and a pitched top.

The gate was recently erected between Breeze and the sandstone Polo Ralph Lauren store as part of the \$900,000 upgrade of Bastion Square, paid for by merchants, building owners, the city and the province.

Belle Bonner, Polo co-manager, believes the gate more properly belongs on Langley Street, where

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— Phyllis Linklater
Bastion Square merchant

Bastion Square begins.

"It is out of place somehow. It just does not fit in with the rest of the street."

She likes the design but thinks it would be better suited to another downtown location, such as Market Square.

Jim Munro, of Munro's Books, was appalled when he saw the gate.

"I am very, very disappointed in it."

The pillars are "spindly" and not in proportion with the rest of the gate.

He believes the gate cuts off the view of the corner of the 96-year-old Polo building which was de-

signed by F.M. Rattenbury.

Unhappiness with the gate is the latest issue for merchants in the block between Government and Langley, who have had concerns about being included in the revitalization project and have been unhappy with the formula setting out their payments.

Elizabeth Low, downtown co-ordinator, pleads for patience, saying the gate is not finished. It should be completed by mid-March.

Glass will be installed on top of and on the sides of the pitched top, lights will go in, and a neon sign with the words Bastion Square is also planned.

The green, black and red color scheme was chosen for the square revitalization and will be seen in other features, Low said.

The goal is to attract people into the square and Low expects the arch will become a meeting place.

Roger Harper, of Dig This at 45 Bastion Sq., is withholding judgment until the final touches have been made but believes the gate will bring in tourists.

"People are being a little too critical too soon."

Audrey Alsterberg, of Re-Bar Modern Food, at 50 Bastion Sq., said, "My feelings are generally positive at this point."

The gate's design is a reflection of that of the Victoria Eaton Centre, she said.

Alsterberg questions the value of some of the revitalization work.

"I do not feel that the entire project has done that much to improve the square. It was nice to have the wall [on Wharf Street] down."



John McKay/Times-Colonist
■ WORK proceeds on Bastion Square gateway at Government Street.