



City Hall  
Centennial Square  
Victoria, B.C.  
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(604) 385-5711

City of **VICTORIA** British Columbia

March 16, 1988

TO: Chairman and Members  
Heritage Advisory Committee

FROM: S. Barber  
Planning Department

RE: 634 AVALON STREET. Butler Residence. Proposed exterior alterations to a Heritage Designation House. Heritage Designation Bylaw No. 30. Zoned: R-2, Two Family Dwelling District. FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

The proposal involves a new addition on the west elevation of the existing Victorian-Italianate cottage. The addition involves a new dormer on the second storey to accommodate new interior living space and a new bay window extending the full height to the second storey. The new addition has been located on a secondary elevation away from the primary street elevations of the existing house. The roof form, materials and detailing is sympathetic to the character of the existing house.

*a new, not the second storey*

The City's "Design Guidelines for Rehabilitation and Restoration of Designated and Listed Buildings" states:

"7. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties is suitable when such alterations do not destroy or alter the heritage components of a building, and when such alterations and additions are compatible in size, scale, finish and character with the building and its surroundings."

*not compatible in size, scale & character*

The new Rehabilitation Standards and Guidelines published by the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture of the Province of British Columbia states on Page 44:

"Not recommended: Change in the configuration of a roof by adding new features such as dormer windows, vents or skylights so that the historic character is diminished; particular care should be taken to locate new roof features (skylights, vent stacks, chimneys) away from view of the front or public right-of-way."

In the publication "Respectful Rehabilitation" Answers to Your Questions About Old Buildings" published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation contains a section on detailed guidelines for rehabilitating historic buildings in relation to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. Under the section on roofs with respect to alterations/additions for the new use, the following is the recommended course of action:

"Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office or storage spaces, elevator housing, decks and terraces, or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character defining features."

#### DISCUSSION

As the owner of the property has indicated an urgent need for increased interior living space, the proposed addition has been submitted for approval. It would appear that the addition has been sensitively integrated into the existing form of the house and has respected the principles stated above. IT HASN'T

It is therefore recommended this application be APPROVED.

Note: One aspect the Committee may wish to discuss is whether it is appropriate to replicate the historic detail in the eaves' ornamentation. The National Park Service in the United States generally recommends that new additions protect the historical significance by making a visual distinction between old and new; i.e. "Plan the new addition in a manner that provides some differentiation in material, colour and detailing, so that the new work does not appear to be part of the historic building. The character of the historic resource should be identifiable after the addition is constructed." It may be that a simpler treatment of the new dormer and addition might make it more distinguishable as a new addition.

SB:11

MOVED

SECONDED

That the design for the canopy on the north elevation be approved subject to:

1. The design and details being simplified so that it is clearly distinguishable as a new addition; and
2. The stucco frame on the sides of the door being widened to match more closely the width of the canopy above, and being appropriately detailed.

CARRIED

805 BROUGHTON STREET. Royal Theatre. Proposed additions and exterior alterations. Public Heritage Building.

Mr. Barber explained that because the proposal was the result of a design competition, it did not go through the Advisory Design Panel and the Heritage Advisory Committee and it was on the agenda for information out of courtesy to the Committee..

CITY COUNCIL REFERRAL FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

634 AVALON STREET. Butler Residence. Proposed exterior alterations to a Heritage Designated House. Heritage Designation Bylaw No. 30. Zoned: R-2, Two Family Dwelling District.  
FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL.

Mr. Terry Williams attended to outline the proposal.

Mr. Barber explained that the owner is applying to extend his existing residence by adding a second level on the side. Mr. Williams explained that the proposed upper bay window had been modified by dividing it into two instead of three, more in keeping with the existing windows.

Mr. Barber read a letter which has been received from Mr. Butler, the owner.

There was considerable discussion regarding the appropriateness of such a significant and major alteration to a designated house. Some members of the Committee argued there are few examples left of this type of one storey bungalow in Victoria and the form of the house should therefore be preserved. It was suggested the appearance would be improved by carrying the eave line of the roof around the bay window at the roof line.

MOVED

SECONDED

That the proposal for exterior alterations to a Heritage Designated House be APPROVED, subject to carrying the line of the eave around the bay window at the second storey.

CARRIED



Heritage Advisory Committee  
Minutes

- 5 -

March 21, 1988

The members requested that the results of the voting for 634 Avalon Street be put on record.

One member of the Committee abstained from voting; three voted in favour of the motion and John Pallett, Jennifer Barr and Jim Stiven voted against the motion. The Chairman cast the tie-breaking vote.



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City of **VICTORIA** British Columbia

May 10, 1988

TO: Chairman and Members  
Heritage Advisory Committee

FROM: S. Barber  
Planning Department

RE: ~~634 AVALON STREET~~ - Heritage Designated House  
Heritage Designation By-law No.  
Zoned - R-2, Two Family Dwelling District  
For Recommendation to Council  
Re Validity of Designation Following Significant  
Exterior Alterations

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The Committee of the Whole, at its meeting of May 5, 1988, considered the recommendations of the Heritage Advisory Committee and the Advisory Design Panel regarding the exterior alterations proposed for the designated house at 634 Avalon Street. The Committee also heard a delegation from the Hallmark Society, Mr. Mark Madoff, outlining the concerns of the society with the approval of these alterations. (See letter attached). Members of Council expressed concern about the impact of the exterior alterations on the validity of the heritage designation of the house. The matter was, therefore, referred to the Heritage Advisory Committee for a recommendation back to Council.

Another matter concerning this application was the reported fact that this house had received financial assistance from the City of Victoria in the past for exterior work in relation to its heritage designation. The City's back files on financial assistance were turned over to the Victoria Heritage Foundation upon its inception and this information is currently being researched and will be available at the meeting.

The proposed exterior alteration to the west side of this house has provoked great debate within the heritage community of Victoria. Many individuals are of the opinion that the scale of the addition is inappropriate and results in a significant loss of historic character to the house. In turn, members of

Council have questioned not the appropriateness of the exterior treatment, but the appropriateness of the continuing heritage designation on a building which has been so significantly altered.

A copy of the Department's previous report on this application dated March 16, 1988 is appended to this report for information.

The most useful reference in discussing this question is 'Preservation Brief No. 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns.' by Kay D. Weeks, of the U. S. Department of the Interior, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services. A copy of this brief has been previously circulated to all members of the Heritage Advisory Committee. Several paragraphs in the introduction to this brief deserve highlighting here.

"Change is as inevitable in buildings and neighbourhoods as it is in individuals and families. Never static, buildings and neighbourhoods grow, diminish, and continue to evolve as each era's technological advances bring conveniences such as heating, street paving, electricity and air conditioning; as the effects of violent weather, uncontrolled fire, or slow unchecked deterioration destroy vulnerable material; as businesses expand, change hands, become obsolete; as building codes are established to enhance life, safety and health; or as additional family living space is alternately needed and abandoned. (Note: underlining is mine).

When the subject of "new" exterior additions is introduced, however, areas of agreement usually tend to diminish. This is understandable because the subject raises some serious questions. Can an historic building be enlarged for a new use without destroying what is historically significant? And just what is significant about each particular historic building that should be preserved? Finally, what new construction is appropriate to the old building?

Note: Entire districts or neighbourhoods may be listed in the National Register of Historic Places for their significance to a certain period of American history (e.g. activities in a commercial district between 1870 and 1910). This "framing" of historic districts has led to a concern that listing in the National Register may discourage any physical change beyond a certain historical period - particularly in the form of attached exterior additions. This is not the case. National Register listing does not mean that an entire building or district



is frozen in time and that no change can be made without compromising the historical significance. It also does not mean that each portion of an historic building is equally significant and must be retained intact and without change. Admittedly, whether an attached new addition is small or large, there will always be some loss of material and some change in the form of the historic building. There will also generally be some change in the relationship between the buildings and its site, neighbourhood or district. Some change is, thus, anticipated within each rehabilitation of the building for a contemporary use"

The difficulty with this application is that it falls within the gray area of what is an acceptable alteration and what is an unacceptable alteration to an historic building. For example, if the applicant had proposed adding a simple dormer to the roof, it is likely that no one would object, however, many individuals in the heritage community feel that the scale of this proposed alteration overwhelms the existing form and character of this one-storey cottage. The key aspects of this issue can be summarized in the 'Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings' set out by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Under the topic "New Additions to Historic Buildings", the following is the recommended policy:

"Locating the attached exterior addition at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of an historic building and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building."

The policy of what is not recommended states:

"Designing a new addition so that its size and scale in relationship to the historic building are out of proportion, thus diminishing the historic character."

It is the responsibility of the Heritage Advisory Committee to determine the appropriateness of the proposed addition/alteration. Having made this decision, it is clear from the above discussion that an approved alteration/addition does not compromise the historical significance of the historic resource.

It is therefore, recommended that the heritage designation of 634 Avalon Street be maintained.

Attachments

SB/ss

CITY OF VICTORIA HERITAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SPECIAL MEETING

Tuesday, May 31, 1988

PRESENT: D. Hambleton                      Staff: S. Barber  
          J. Stiven                                 L. Carrington  
          A. Kerr                                     J. Wegren  
          G. Keddy  
          J. Pallett  
          J. Barr  
          A. Rushforth  
          Alderman Segger

ABSENT: G. Symmons  
          H. Symonds

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Barber advised that there were no announcements.

MINUTES

It was inadvertently reported that A. Rushforth had attended the meeting of May 16, 1988.

MOVED

SECONDED

That the Minutes of the Regular meeting on May 16, 1988 be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

CITY COUNCIL REFERRAL FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

634 Avalon Street. Heritage Designated House. Heritage Designation Bylaw No. 30. Zoned R-2 Two Family Dwelling District. Validity of heritage designation following significant alteration. FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL.

Terry Williams of Wade Williams Partnership attended to outline the proposal.

Mr. Williams displayed the revised drawings and advised committee members of letters that had been received from 6 neighbouring property owners approving of the renovations. This matter had previously been considered by the Heritage Advisory Committee and Committee of the Whole. The main issue at hand was the validity of the designation of the property following significant exterior alterations.



634 AVALON STREET (Cont'd)

There was some discussion about whether to restrict the discussion to the validity of the heritage designation. Some members wished to discuss the whole issue of the Committee's recommendation to approve the addition as they were not aware that funds for restoration had previously been granted for this house.

MOVED

SECONDED

That the Committee discuss the issue of their previous recommendation for approval of the addition to 634 Avalon Street as well as the validity of the heritage designation.

CARRIED

Alderman Segger informed the Committee that he was not prepared to carry forward to Council recommendations on heritage designation unless there are explicit reasons for the designation. In the case of 634 Avalon, one of the problems is a lack of clarity on the reasons the house was designated in the first place. For, although the bungalow form of house built in Victoria at the turn of the century is unique, there are hundreds of these bungalows. A full background research study would have to be carried out to determine the relative priority of this individual building. In the future, where a building has a high artifact value, it must be clearly stated at the time of designation.

There was considerable discussion about the significant impact the proposed addition would have on what had been a one-storey bungalow and the precedent it would set for what could be done to other designated heritage houses. Mr. Barber stated that although he understood the preservation concerns of some members of the Committee, the city should maintain some flexibility in the application of its standards. Many members of the community would not agree with a rigid interpretation of historic preservation standards and it might be counter productive in terms of trying to educate the community.

MOVED

SECONDED

That the heritage designation for 634 Avalon Street be maintained.

CARRIED