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PRESERVE

Your voice for heritage in the Capital Region and the Islands since 1973

**From the Desk of John Dam,
President, Hallmark Heritage Society.**

How much time has gone into creating and conserving our beautiful city of Victoria? How much planning design effort has gone into the construction and redevelopment of the countless buildings shaping its character? How much time has gone into developing and revising the Design Guidelines to protect the national historic district of Old Town? Enough to carefully maintain the very essence of what continues to draw people to want to live in and visit the city year after year - the visitors coming largely to enjoy the district of Old Town. Can it be that one day all this creative thinking, planning, and careful redevelopment is emphatically pushed aside with the approval of a 12 storey building that not only violates every effort that has been put in to protect the very character of this district but all the while blythely promoted in the name of creating more hotel space for those that want to visit. Why would we undermine why people want to visit by creating accommodations for them in lieu of?

City staff are currently considering a proposal for a 12 storey building of average character on the prominent corner of Government Street and Pandora Avenue. Though yet in the design development stage and subject to modifications, the 'elephant in the room' is the 12 storeys. A supposed bookend to the Belmont building,

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The current Old Town Design Guidelines, rewritten and approved only 5 years ago to accommodate the need to adapt the district and reflect our modern needs, starts out with its very first statement declaring its purpose to 'promote the long term stability of Old Town by encouraging contextually sensitive new buildings and additions'.... and then goes on to state 'This document promotes architecture and design that embodies our modern age, while simultaneously reinforcing the timeless urban design and architectural principles of Old Town, which is key to achieving a “good fit”.' The guidelines then present the Statement of Significance for the district which contains a list of character defining elements - arguably none of which are reflected by the current building design. It is noted under Section 5 - Design Guidelines for New Buildings and Additions - that the intent of the guidelines is " To ensure the design of new buildings and additions compliments the mass, scale, height and street wall pattern of nearby heritage buildings and the immediate context." This statement is further defined with the individual guidelines requiring:

- ... continuous "street wall" edge
 - ... reflect established proportions, composition, spatial organization of historic facades
 - Include a distinct roof line ...
 - Ensure the main facade height does not exceed the facade height of a directly adjacent building by more than three storeys ...
 - Vary the massing of a new building on a corner site
 - Modulate the horizontal/vertical building mass ...
- Supporting these local guidelines and upon which they are most certainly based are the national Standards and



3. VIEW LOOKING NORTH ALONG GOVERNMENT STREET



4. VIEW LOOKING WEST ALONG PANDORA AVE



1. VIEW LOOKING SOUTH ON GOVERNMENT STREET



2. VIEW FROM CENTENNIAL SQUARE



4. PLAZA AT GOVERNMENT & PANDORA

- Understanding visual relationships and how they contribute to the heritage value of the cultural landscape
- Not introducing new features that are incompatible in size, scale, material, style, and colour.
- Designing a new feature when required by a new use that respects the historic visual relationships in the cultural landscape. This can include matching established proportions and densities, such as maintaining the overall ratio of open space to building mass in an urban heritage district when designing an infill building.



Why are we trying to recapture over 16% of our noted 'lost' hotel capacity in one building in our Old Town district? Why are we even considering 12 storeys in this district against our decades of effort to conserve its character. This feels like a surreptitious over reach to see what can be had. A proposal was originally presented for a seven storey hotel. Now but a few years later economics require this to almost double to 12 storeys. If a contextually sensitive hotel cannot fit this site within our guidelines, why aren't we considering what can?

Hallmark Heritage Society AGM

7:30 pm Wednesday, September 25, 2024 at Wentworth Villa Architectural Museum, 1156 Fort Street.

Special Guest Speaker - Larry Kreisman will speak on the programs and efforts that have made Historic Seattle a leader in heritage preservation.

Admission is free but seating is limited.

Please join us!



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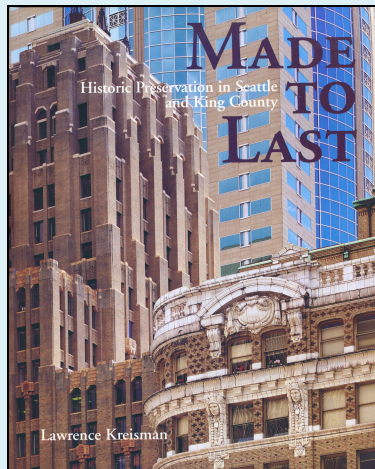
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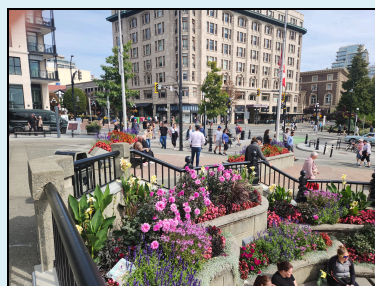


Larry Kreisman: Made to Last Preserving History through Buildings: Lessons from Seattle

Despite the relative youth of the Pacific Northwest, its buildings and historic sites are reminders of a rich and colorful heritage.



In this program, Larry Kreisman celebrates the 50th anniversary year of Historic Seattle, showcasing the public development authority and membership organization that has preserved and restored buildings, provided the community with educational programming, and encouraged people to get involved in preservation through its advocacy efforts. *Made to Last* celebrates buildings whose age is a valuable and contributing force in the community. Larry's commitments to this organization started as a volunteer in the early 1980s; researcher and author of "Historic Preservation in Seattle" in 1985; its expanded edition, "*Made to Last: Historic Preservation in Seattle and King County*" in 1999; co-author with Glenn Mason of "The Arts and Crafts Movement in the Pacific Northwest in 2007; Program Director for 20 years; and editor and co-author of the 2014 publication, "Tradition and Change on Seattle's First Hill: Propriety, Profanity, Pills, and Preservation."



How Do We Define Our City?

Is It Old Town Victoria?

Old Town in Victoria, British Columbia, is a vibrant, historically rich area known for its beautifully preserved architecture and a charming atmosphere that harks back to the city's past. As the oldest commercial district on the West Coast of Canada, walking through Old Town feels like stepping back in time. The area is lined with colorful Victorian buildings that

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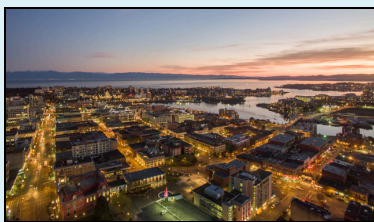
offering unique local products. The historic streets, combined with the modern buzz of activity, create a picturesque setting that's perfect for leisurely strolls.



In the heart of Old Town Victoria, the beautiful old buildings stand as enduring testaments to the architectural prowess and historical narratives of bygone eras. These structures, often characterized by intricate facades and ornate detailing, not only exemplify the aesthetic sensibilities of the periods in which they were constructed but also serve as cultural landmarks that continue to fascinate both locals and tourists alike.



Walking through Old Town, one can't help but be captivated by the harmonious blend of old-world charm and modern vitality. Each building tells a story, whether it's through the weathered stones, the grand archways, or the delicate carvings that adorn the exteriors. The preservation of these buildings often reflects a community's commitment to maintaining its historical identity amidst ongoing urban development.



These architectural treasures contribute significantly to the city's ambiance, offering a visual journey through time. They are frequently the subjects of guided tours and are often surrounded by cafes and shops that imbue the area with a lively, welcoming atmosphere. As the day fades into night, the illuminated facades create a magical setting, reminding us of the enduring beauty and historical depth that these buildings bring to the urban landscape.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN SURVEY

Have you participated in the City of Victoria Official Community Plan (OCP) survey? Your opportunities are getting smaller. The survey ends on Sunday, September 1, 2024

Having carefully reviewed the survey and what it presents, we find that there will be more of what they deceptively refer to as “community villages” with buildings up to six stories high and “local villages” with buildings up to four stories

[Link to City of Victoria OCP Survey](#)

[Burnside Gorge Community Association](#)

[Downtown Residents Association](#)

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The use of the word village is quite deceptive. Remember these “villages” are going to be found within our existing residential areas.

Past experience indicates that any engagement process will be limited as planners and Council rush to approve any project that meets the Official Community Plan in the smallest manner. Presentations on many of these projects will promote how each project, no matter how apathetic to good design, meets some aspect of the OCP while frequently ignoring the many aspects in which it does not. And, if a project does not meet the OCP, Council is quick to amend it. Take the OCP survey and get engaged with your Community Association. Citizen engagement through your community can enhance the decision making process at City Hall and result in decisions that more accurately reflect community values and concerns.

Community Association

Hillside Quadra Community Association

James Bay Neighbourhood Association

South Jubilee Neighbourhood Association

North Jubilee Neighbourhood Association

North Park Neighbourhood Association

Oaklands Community Association

Rockland Neighbourhood Association

Vic West Community Association

Victoria Needs an Architectural Critic

Architectural criticism can play role in shaping our built environment by offering insightful evaluations of architecture, including aesthetics, functionality, and context. It serves to bridge the gap between architecture and the public, helping laypersons understand complex designs and their implications.

Critics assess buildings not just on visual appeal but also on their sustainability, accessibility, and integration with the surrounding environment and this can be important in a city with many historical districts. By critiquing these aspects, they influence both public opinion and future architectural practices. Effective criticism can elevate the standards of architecture, ensuring structures not only meet current needs but are also adaptable for future requirements. Furthermore, it holds architects accountable, encouraging thoughtful design that enhances human experiences.

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received as to architectural values. All too often we are presented with a rectangular mass “enhanced” with the wings of projecting balconies. We get buildings that are completely out of context with the surrounding neighbourhood.

Victoria Needs an Architectural Critic!

HALLMARK MEMBERSHIP RENEWS ON SEPTEMBER 30th.

Belonging to the Hallmark Heritage Society offers invaluable benefits. It provides a platform for individuals passionate about conserving cultural legacies to engage actively in preservation efforts. Members contribute to safeguarding historical sites and traditions that might otherwise succumb to modernization or neglect.

This involvement not only protects the physical manifestations of our past but also fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of history among community members. Furthermore, these groups often advocate for policies that ensure the long-term preservation of important cultural sites, influencing local and national heritage strategies.

By participating, members gain a sense of accomplishment and pride in preserving their shared heritage, strengthening community bonds and ensuring that future generations can enjoy and learn from these historical treasures.

JOIN OR RENEW NOW

Active participation leads to more informed and empowered citizens

Now is the time to renew your Hallmark Heritage Society Membership. [CLICK HERE !](#)

Involvement is a linchpin for the overall well-being and sustainability of communities and societies.

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