

ST. JOHN'S

Report of Built Heritage Experts Panel

**April 20, 2022 &
April 27, 2022
12:00 p.m.
Virtual**

- Present:** Dawn Boutilier, Planner (Meeting of April 20th only)
Rachael Fitkowski, Chair for April 27th, Landscape Architect
Katherine Hann, Historian/Archival Expert/ Historic Preservation
Nicholas Lynch, Chair for April 20th, Other Category (Meeting of April 20th only)
Mitchell O'Reilly, Contractor
Michelle Sullivan, Other Category
John Hancock, Architecture (Meeting of April 27th only)
- Staff:** Ken O'Brien, Chief Municipal Planner
Ann Marie Cashin, Heritage and Urban Planner
Rob Schamper, Technical Advisor
Jennifer Squires, Legislative Assistant
- Others:** Craig Flynn, Owner, O'Reilly's
Shaun Keefe, Applicant, George Street United Church
Reverend John Maich, George Street United Church
Breannah Flynn, First Light
Chris Woodford, Woodford Architecture
Sylvester Crocker, Consultant
Jeff Reardon, Reardon Construction and Development

1. 13 George Street, Second Storey Patio, INT2200008

The Planner III, Urban Design & Heritage, provided the Built Heritage Experts Panel (BHEP) with an overview of an application from O'Reilly's for a second storey patio at 13 George Street. The building is located in Heritage Area 1, and the current design standards state that decks are not

permitted on the street-facing façade of the building. Staff would like the BHEP to make a recommendation to Council concerning the deck at 13 George Street and advised that the renovation would change the existing upstairs windows to doors, and the design would be more in line with the original, industrial style of the building.

Craig Flynn, the owner of O'Reilly's then joined the meeting to speak on the application and answer any questions. Mr. Flynn advised that he was looking to replace the existing awning of the building with a deck, which would enhance both the building and the street. Mr. Flynn wanted to maintain the current look of the building, which currently hosts awning and a large sign. He then noted that the patio was grandfathered in, and the new deck would protect the patio from inclement weather. The deck would be 2 to 2.5 feet wider than the current awning to cover the lower area and would be waterproofed. He will be keeping the angled edges of the existing awning to maintain the look of the building.

The BHEP asked for information on the material of the railings for the proposed deck, and Mr. Flynn responded that the railings would be black wrought iron, which would tie into the black of the existing windows. Mr. Flynn then stated that the deck would not alter the overall look of the building or streetscape and would not take away from the heritage elements of the building, such as the mansard roof and clapboard. It was then asked if the support posts would extend beyond the patio, and Mr. Flynn responded that the posts would be set back from the edge of the deck and are designed with a cantilever system. The deck would rely on post and beam construction and would be set back far enough so that it would not interfere with snow clearing or any City operations

The Panel then discussed the application, and it was decided that the addition of the deck would not alter the overall façade of the building from a heritage perspective and would animate the streetscape. The following recommendation was made:

Recommendation

Moved By Dawn Boutilier

Seconded By Katherine Hann

The Built Heritage Experts Panel recommend that Council approve the proposed second storey patio and signage at 13 George Street as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

2. George Street United Church, Heritage Designation of Annex, 25 Buchanan Street/130 George Street West, HAR2200004

Staff informed the Panel that George Street United Church, a designated Heritage Building, would like to remove the designation from the newer extension of the building. Provincially, only the original portion of the building is designated, and when the City designated the property in 1989, the footprint, including both the original church and the 1960's extension, were designated. The Statement of Significance only considers the elements of the church and Heritage NL do not consider the extension to be historically significant. The Church would like to remove the designation and subdivide the property for sale, which could result in the demolition of the extension. Should the property be redeveloped, a Heritage Report would be required as the property is adjacent to a designated building.

Originally the extension housed a gym and classrooms associated with the church, but at the moment it houses a small board room and is used for storage. Staff clarified that the City's heritage designation would not prohibit the sale of the parcel, but the buyers would like the designation removed prior to purchase.

Reverend Maich informed the Panel that the original structure of the church would remain unaltered, and any changes would only affect the extension. It was asked what modifications had taken place to the original exterior wall between the church and the extension. Originally there were entrance doors at that façade of the building, the extension was built around these doors, and there currently exists a small courtyard between the two buildings. Two washrooms were added in the 1950s, and these would be reconfigured to open into existing space inside the building but would not affect the original heritage building. The Church would work with Heritage NL to restore the original façade of the building.

The delegation retired from the meeting at this point and the BHEP continued their discussion of the application. The Panel noted that from a federal perspective, the heritage and integrity of any building built 40 years ago and earlier should be maintained. Panel members then discussed the value of mid-century modern architecture, noting that it would be a shame to de-designate a building on the cusp of the 40-to-50-year designation point. At this point, City Staff have not undertaken an assessment of the

annex from a heritage value perspective, as the character defining elements are not present in the architecture. As such, they are comfortable with the Heritage NL designation and there would be no heritage concerns should the annex be demolished based on the Statement of Significance.

It was asked what the restrictions on future development would be should the designation remain. Staff informed the panel that once a building is demolished, the designation no longer exists. All designated buildings require Council's approval for demolition. Removing the designation would expediate the demolition process as it would no longer require Council's approval. The Panel then discussed the preservation of the trees on the property and noted their value to the streetscape. Staff advised that the new development would be required to follow the regulations concerning landscaping and tree preservation.

Members of the Panel were not in support of removing the designation, as both the provincial and municipal designation state that the "footprint" is designated. It was noted that that the area has seen significant change, and not enough information was known about the extension. Panel members felt that as the church could proceed with the sale with the designation intact, they would not support removal of the designation at this time.

Recommendation

Moved By Katherine Hann

The Built Heritage Experts Panel recommends that the heritage designation of the George Street United Street Church annex at 25 Buchanan Street/130 George Street West be retained.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. 265 Lemarchant Road Renovations

Staff provided the Built Heritage Experts Panel (BHEP) with an update on the West End Fire Hall, located at 265 Lemarchant Road. The BHEP recommended that the property be designated as a heritage building, and Council approved of the designation on December 13, 2021. At the present time, the City has put the building out to tender, and have entered into a draft agreement with the proponent, Gary Reardon of Reardon Construction and Development. They have proposed that the fire hall be

converted into an apartment building. There are several conditions outlined in the RFP which must be met for approval, and the City is working with the proponent to ensure all conditions are satisfied. The preliminary drawings have been brought to the BHEP for commentary and feedback.

Staff noted that some key components have not been incorporated into the new design, such as the garage doors and round posts at the front of the building. Other features that should be included are first storey windows that replicate the doors, signage that reflects the original signage, and glass blocks to reflect the mid-century look of the building. The apartments would have attached decks for each unit, and this is not permitted on the front-facing façade of designated buildings unless it is part of the original design. One and a half storeys are proposed to be added to the height of the building for additional units, which could meet the height limit of the land-use zone.

Panel members noted that the photos including the horizontal band at the front spoke to the language of the building, and that the plans do not speak to that same language. While being in support of the adaptive reuse as apartments and recognizing that the project must be viable, it was noted that proper respect was not being paid to the key features of the building. The context of the building was then considered, and members noted that the building was surrounded by two storey residential buildings, green space, and mid-century industrial buildings on the opposite side of the street. The proposed design does not fit the context of the area.

Additional consideration was given to the extension of the building, with members noting that the design detracts from the character defining elements. Staff referenced the Heritage Area Design Standards, which state the following concerning additions to existing designated building:

- Additions shall be the same architectural style, or similar and compatible with the building's architectural characteristics.
- Modern façade designs may be approved by Council provided the addition is physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the designated building; enhances the visual prominence of the designated building; and does not detract from the character defining elements of the designated building.

The delegation then joined the meeting to discuss the design of 265 Lemarchant Road. The Panel were informed that the proponent was

looking to convert the fire hall to condominiums as a form of adaptive reuse. They hope to work with the existing construction of the building and add two additional stores to make it 4 storeys at the front, and 5 storeys at the rear. The proponent intends to keep the concrete of the main building and construct the extension in wood and acknowledged the challenge in merging the existing building and the new addition.

The Panel cautioned that as the fire hall was only the second modern building to be given heritage designation, consideration needs to be given to the weight the designation carries in terms of the City's portfolio of heritage buildings. The elements need to be respected, and the Heritage By-Law is clear on how the approach to design should drive development. The modern façade is not subordinate to and distinguishable from the designated building and does not enhance the visual prominence of the designated building. A step back for the extension was then recommended as a way to make the extension subordinate and highlight the front façade. Stepping back the extension would reduce the overall footprint, which may affect the feasibility of the building. The Panel suggested thinking of the original structure as a podium upon which the extension would be built and noted that there is a great deal of room for creativity for the adaptive reuse and addition. The colour of the building was then discussed, and the Panel noted that the proposed break down of the colours did not speak to the original building. The proponent was agreeable to considering a return to the original concrete panel or finish.

The delegation will take the comments of the BHEP into consideration and revise their drawings for additional consultation. The Panel thanked the delegation for presenting to the group early in the process to avoid unnecessary rework.

Staff asked the Panel if a Heritage Report should be required for the property, as it would provide additional context and would help with adherence to the standards and guidelines. The Panel were in support of the Heritage Report, as it would be of benefit to both the Panel and the applicant. There is little understanding of mid-century modern architecture when compared to the typical Victorian or Queen Anne properties, and the report will help to define the characteristics of the style of the period.

Subsequent to the meeting, Staff drafted the Terms of Reference for the Heritage Report and circulated the information to the BHEP for approval via e-vote. The following recommendation was made:

Recommendation

The Built Heritage Experts Panel recommend that Council require the applicant for renovations and an extension at 265 Lemarchant Road to prepare a Heritage Report, and that Council approve of the attached Terms of Reference for the Heritage Report.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

RACHAEL FITKOWSKI, CHAIR