

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: George Street United Church, Heritage Designation of Annex, 25 Buchanan Street/130 George Street West, HAT2200004

Date Prepared: May 11, 2022

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: Councillor Maggie Burton, Heritage

Ward: Ward 2

Decision/Direction Required:

To remove the Heritage Building designation on the annex (rear extension) of George Street United Church, 25 Buchanan Street/130 George Street West.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City has received an application to remove the Heritage Building designation from the annex portion of George Street United Church. Should Council agree, the Heritage Building designation will remain on the original part of George Street United Church.

The applicants are preparing to subdivide the two properties as shown on the attached survey. If Heritage Building designation is removed and the sale and subdivision proceeds, the applicants propose in the interim to lease the annex property back to the church until a time when they seek to redevelop it. Once they determine a redevelopment approach, the long-term plan is to demolish the annex, return the back wall of the church to its former state, and redevelop the annex site with a new building.

George Street United Church was designated by the City as a Heritage Building on July 21, 1989. The heritage statement of significance is attached for reference. The cornerstone for the church was laid on May 27, 1872, and the first service was held on December 4, 1873. In 1959-60, a gymnasium and classrooms were added in a new annex. While the statement does not specifically mention the annex, where the annex was built in 1960 and the designation occurred in 1989, the annex was included in the footprint of the building and the City's heritage designation. The annex is currently used as office, boardroom and storage space. Only the footprint of the building is designated by the City; the remainder of the property including the yards are not designated.

George Street United Church is also a provincial Registered Heritage Structure (RHS); however, Heritage NL have confirmed that only the original church building is provincially designated. The provincial designation does not include the annex.

ST. JOHN'S

George Street United Church, Heritage Designation of Annex,
25 Buchanan Street/130 George Street West, HAT2200004

Built Heritage Experts Panel's (BHEP) Recommendation

The applicants and representatives from George Street United Church attended the May 20, 2022 BHEP Meeting as a delegation. The Panel discussed this item at that meeting and then made a recommendation following further discussion at the May 27, 2022 meeting.

It was questioned if the congregation had been consulted in the process, and the response was that the congregation had given their permission to negotiate the sale of the parcel of land adjacent to the building. Reverend Maich informed the Panel that the original structure of the church would remain unaltered, and any changes would only affect the extension. Originally there were entrance doors at the rear façade of the building and the extension was built around these doors with 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 the City and Heritage NL to restore the original façade of the building.

The Panel noted that from a federal perspective, the heritage and integrity of any building built 40 years ago and earlier should be maintained and felt that it would shame to de-designate a building on the cusp of the 40-to-50-year designation point. 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. 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. There were also concerns that the removal of the designation would result in an empty lot.

While from a regulatory perspective the Church could subdivide the property with the building intake (with renovations between the two parcels to meet fire, life safety and building code), the applicant's proposal to purchase the subdivided property will be jeopardized. They noted in the meeting that removal of the designation is a condition of the sale. The Statement of Significance only considers the elements of the church and Heritage NL do not consider the annex to be historically significant, therefore staff disagree with the BHEP's recommendation and recommend removing the heritage designation from the annex portion of the building. While staff agree with the Panel that this will be a loss of an older building, this is a situation where the City must balance the future of the George Street United Church and the church's ability to maintain the original building with the loss of the annex.

Should Council agree with the staff recommendation, any redevelopment of the rear lot would require a Heritage Report and public consultation as the property is adjacent to a Heritage Building.

From Section 8 (3) of the St. John's Heritage By-Law, Council shall require a Heritage Report for an application to amend or revoke the designation of a Heritage Building. A Heritage Report shall evaluate and identify heritage values and resources located on the site, neighbourhood or streetscape, and address the anticipated impacts that the proposed work may have on the heritage value of a building, neighbourhood or streetscape. Where in the opinion of Council it is appropriate to do so, Council may accept a staff report in lieu of the

George Street United Church, Heritage Designation of Annex,
25 Buchanan Street/130 George Street West, HAT2200004

Heritage Report. In this case, staff feel that we have sufficient information to make a recommendation and it is recommended to accept the staff report in lieu of a Heritage Report.

From Section 11(1)(b) of the Heritage By-Law, unless Council directs otherwise, an application to amend or revoke the designation of a Heritage Building requires public consultation. Generally, this includes a notice to property owners within 150 metres of the subject property, as well as on the City's website and in *The Telegram*. A public meeting could also be required. Staff recommend that the proposed removal of the Heritage Building designation from the annex be advertised and mailed to properties within 150 metres of the site prior to Council making a decision on the matter.

Following public consultation, any feedback will be brought back to Council for consideration. Should Council wish to remove the designation off the annex portion of George Street United Church, they would then direct the Legal Department to prepare a Designation By-Law.



Subject Property: George Street United Church
Designated Heritage Building
25 Buchanan Street/130 George Street West

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Not applicable.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: Neighbouring residents and property owners; Heritage NL.
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Sustainable City: Plan for land use and preserve and enhance the natural and built environment where we live.

A Sustainable City: Facilitate and create the conditions that drive the economy by being business and industry friendly; and being a location of choice for residents, businesses and visitors.
4. Alignment with Adopted Plans: City of St. John's Act; St. John's Heritage By-Law
5. Legal or Policy Implications: A Designation By-Law would be required to revise the designation of George Street United Church.
6. Privacy Implications: Not applicable.
7. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Public consultation, as per Section 11(1)(b) of the St. John's Heritage By-Law is recommended.
8. Human Resource Implications: Not applicable.
9. Procurement Implications: Not applicable.
10. Information Technology Implications: Not applicable.
11. Other Implications: Not applicable.

Recommendation:

That Council:

- (1) as per Section 11(1)(b) of the St. John's Heritage By-Law, consider the removal of the Heritage Building designation on the annex portion of George Street United Church located at 25 Buchanan Street/130 George Street West and advertise the application in accordance with the provisions of the Development Regulation; and
- (2) as per Section 8(3) of the St. John's Heritage By-Law accept the staff report in lieu of a Heritage Report.

George Street United Church, Heritage Designation of Annex,
25 Buchanan Street/130 George Street West, HAT2200004

Prepared by: Ann-Marie Cashin, MCIP, Planner III – Urban Design & Heritage

Approved by: Ken O'Brien, MCIP, Chief Municipal Planner

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	George Street United Church, Heritage Designation of Annex, 25 Buchanan Street_130 George Street West, HAT2200004 (COTW).docx
Attachments:	- George Street United Church - Attachments(COTW).pdf
Final Approval Date:	May 12, 2022

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature - Task assigned to Ken O'Brien was completed by workflow administrator Karen Chafe

Ken O'Brien - May 12, 2022 - 10:35 AM

No Signature - Task assigned to Jason Sinyard was completed by workflow administrator Karen Chafe

Jason Sinyard - May 12, 2022 - 10:38 AM