

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: 226 Water Street, Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) Building
Designated Heritage Building
Façade Renovations

Date Prepared: October 30, 2019

Report To: His Worship the Mayor and Members of Council

Councillor & Role: Councillor Maggie Burton, Planning and Development Lead

Ward: 2

Decision/Direction Required:

To seek approval for façade renovations at 226 Water Street, the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) Building, which is a designated heritage building.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

Gannet Construction Ltd., on behalf of the RBC Royal Bank has applied for façade renovations at 226 Water Street. The subject property is located in Heritage Area 1, the Commercial Downtown District of the St. John's Municipal Plan and is zoned Commercial Central Retail (CCR). The property is designated by Council as a Heritage Building.

Any exterior alterations to a designated Heritage Building require Council's approval. At the May 13, 2019 Council meeting, Council directed that minor maintenance applications for designated Heritage Buildings can be evaluated by staff and sent directly to a Council meeting for Council's approval.

In 2018, there were reports of stone elements that had fallen off the building onto the sidewalk. Since that time, the condition of the stone masonry walls at the front façade on Water Street has been reviewed. While there are several repairs recommended, the façade is in relatively good condition. The two areas of concern are loose stone at the top-level cornice and in the window surrounds at the 1980s extension of the building.

The applicant is proposing to repair all of the elements recommended in the report. These include: removing the metal cornice flashing to repair damaged stone, removing stones surrounding the 1980s windows to assess waterproofing solutions, as well as minor repairs like re-pointing mortar joints, replacing small areas of stone, repairing cracked stone and cleaning the surface.

The applicants carefully considered the repairs needed and proposed best practice solutions that will conserve the historic building. Therefore, it is recommended to approve the façade renovations, as proposed.

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Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Not applicable.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders:
Property owner
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans:
A Sustainable City – Plan for land use and preserve and enhance the natural and built environment where we live.
4. Legal or Policy Implications: Not applicable.
5. Engagement and Communications Considerations: Not applicable.
6. Human Resource Implications: Not applicable.
7. Procurement Implications: Not applicable.
8. Information Technology Implications: Not applicable.
9. Other Implications: Not applicable.

Recommendation:

It is recommended to approve the façade renovations at 226 Water Street, as proposed.

Prepared by/Signature:

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

Signature: _____

Approved by/Date/Signature:

Ken O'Brien, MCIP – Chief Municipal Planner

Signature: _____

AMC/dlm

Attachments:

Location of Subject Property
Photo of Subject Property
Statement of Significance

Location of Subject Property
226 Water Street



Photo of Subject Property



Statement of Significance



226 Water Street - The Royal Bank

Formal Recognition Type

City of St. John's Heritage Building, Structure, Land or Area

Description of Historic Place

The Royal Bank is a stone building in the Classical Revival style located at 226 Water Street, St. John's, NL. It is a large building that occupies an area of downtown St. John's in which several other banking institutions are also present. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

226 Water Street has been designated a City of St. John's Municipal Heritage Building because of its architectural and historic values.

226 Water Street is aesthetically valuable because it is a very fine example of the Classical Revival architectural style. This is evident in the symmetrical façade and balanced use of decorations. Classical details, such as pilasters, dentils, columns, urns and fret work express the institutional nature of this bank building, while also emphasizing the importance of the financial institution. 226 Water Street is faced with a lightly colored cut ashlar, and stands apart from surrounding buildings because of its color and high level of decoration. The size of the building is also another distinguishing feature, set off by the very large plate glass windows on the first level. The main entrance is recessed and columns flank each side of the opening.

226 Water Street is historically valuable because it is considered the oldest existing "foreign" branch in Canada. The bank opened in St. John's in 1895, the year the colony's banks failed. Then called the Merchants Bank of Halifax, the Royal Bank opened an agency in Water Street to assist in the restoration of essential banking services. It remained the only branch on the island until 1911.

Source: City of St. John's Archives property file 226 Water Street, Royal Bank.

Character Defining Elements

All elements that reflect the building's Classical Revival design, including:

- symmetry and use of pilasters, columns, dentils urns and fret work in the decoration of the facade of the building;
- light coloured ashlar sheathing;
- shape, size, decoration, and placement of windows;
- brackets under the first storey windows;
- second entrance with its recessed doorway and transom; and
- size, location and dimensions of building.

Notes of Interest

- Large multi-paned windows on first storey façade;
- Pilasters decorate the first storey;
- Urn decorations between the second storey windows;
- Brackets under the first storey windows;
- Fret work over the first storey windows; and
- Second entrance has a recessed doorway with transom.

Location and History

Community	St. John's
Municipality	City of St. John's
Civic Address	226 Water Street
Construction	1892 - 1893
Architect	Unknown
Builder	Unknown
Style	Classical Revival
Building Plan	Rectangular Long Façade
Website Link	http://www.stjohns.ca/index.jsp

Additional Photos

