

Report to the London Advisory Committee on Heritage

To: Chair and Members
London Advisory Committee on Heritage
From: John M. Fleming
Managing Director, Planning and City Planner
Subject: Heritage Alteration Permit Application By: E. Seminara
187 Dundas Street
Downtown Heritage Conservation District
Meeting on: Wednesday September 12, 2018

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, with the advice of the Heritage Planner, the application under Section 42 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for upgrades to the commercial storefront and signage to the building located at 187 Dundas Street, within the Downtown Heritage Conservation District, **BE PERMITTED** with the following terms and conditions:

- (a) The Heritage Alteration Permit be displayed in a location visible from the street until the work is completed.

Executive Summary

Summary of Request

The property at 187 Dundas Street was altered without obtaining Heritage Alteration Permit approval. This Heritage Alteration Permit application seeks to bring into compliance removal of the existing signage and storefront glazing at the street, and to allow upgrades to the commercial storefront and signage that are in keeping with the heritage character of the Downtown Heritage Conservation District.

Purpose and the Effect of Recommended Action

The purpose and effect of the recommended action is to ensure that new construction for an updated commercial storefront and signage is compatible with the heritage character of the Downtown Heritage Conservation District – through the application of terms and conditions.

Rationale of Recommended Action

Unapproved alterations are not compliant with the policies of the *Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan*. The proposed commercial storefront upgrades and signage are compatible.

Analysis

1.0 Background

1.1 Property Location

The property at 187 Dundas Street is located on the south side of Dundas Street, between Richmond and Clarence Streets (Appendix A).

1.2 Cultural Heritage Status

The property at 187 Dundas Street is located within the Downtown Heritage Conservation District, which was designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* on June 27, 2013. 187 Dundas Street is a contributing heritage resource and is recognized

as integral to the broader urban fabric and identified as part of the commercial landscape of the Downtown HCD.

1.3 Description

The cultural heritage resource located at 187 Dundas Street is a three-storey di-chromatic brick, commercial building constructed circa 1887 (Appendix B). 187 Dundas Street is part of the Union Block which also includes 183, 185 and 189 Dundas Street. This block is representative of several other late 19th century commercial blocks in the City of London which are identifiable by the use of red brick with stone trim at the lintels and decorative courses (Baker, p85). An ornamental brick corbel table adorns the cornice of the building – unifying the block, while storefronts and signage exhibit variety in the use of materials and detailing. The upper limits of the commercial signage band is uniform – its datum line defined by the sills of the second-floor windows.

2.0 Legislative/Policy Framework

The *Provincial Policy Statement* (2014) states that “significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.” The *Official Plan* (1989, as amended)/*The London Plan* (approved 2016) provides policies that cultural heritage resources will be conserved and protected.

2.1 Ontario Heritage Act

As per Section 42(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, a Heritage Alteration Permit is required to make alterations to a property within a Heritage Conservation District. As the alterations (specifically the removal of portions of the existing storefront) were undertaken prior to obtaining Heritage Alteration Permit approval, this application met the Conditions for Referral defined within the Delegated Authority By-law (By-law No. C.P.-1502-129), thus requiring consultation with the London Advisory Committee on Heritage (LACH) and a decision by Municipal Council.

The *Ontario Heritage Act* enables municipalities to give the applicant:

- a) The permit applied for;
- b) Notice that the council is refusing the application for the permit; or,
- c) The permit applied for, with terms and conditions attached (Section 42(4), Ontario Heritage Act).

Municipal Council must respond within 90 days after receipt of a Heritage Alteration Permit application (Section 42(4), *Ontario Heritage Act*).

2.2 Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan

The importance of context and compatibility (i.e. heritage resources “fitting in”) is an important principle expressed in the *Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan* (*Downtown HCD Plan*).

A building is intimately connected to its site and to the neighbouring landscape and buildings. [...] An individual building is perceived as part of a grouping and requires its neighbours to illustrate the original design intent. When buildings need to change there is a supportive setting that should be maintained (*Downtown HCD Plan*, 3.1).

Further, stated goals and policies of the *Downtown HCD Plan* include: encouraging rehabilitation and restoration of heritage buildings that are sensitive and respectful of their historical significance; and, encouraging alterations to heritage resources that are complimentary to the District character and streetscape (*Downtown HCD Plan*, 3.2.1).

Relevant design guidelines in the *Downtown HCD Plan* that apply to this heritage alteration permit application include ones for Storefronts (6.1.3.1) and Signage (6.1.3.4). Particular to storefronts in the Downtown HCD is the retention of a high proportion of glazing (approx. 80%) and recessed entries, and the retention and restoration of decorative features and detailing found on transoms, cornices, pilasters and corner posts. Internally illuminated signs are discouraged in the Downtown HCD. Guidelines

state that new signs should be compatible with the building in terms of size, scale, material, style and colour, and should not obscure, damage or destroy character-defining elements. Finally, guidelines state that signage should be located in areas of the building that have traditionally been used for signage; on storefronts, this has typically been above the display window(s) and below the cornice.

3.0 Heritage Alteration Permit Application

As per Section 42(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act, a Heritage Alteration Permit is required to make alterations to a property within a Heritage Conservation District. Heritage staff noted unapproved alterations underway at 187 Dundas Street (specifically the removal of portions of the existing storefront), and a letter was sent to the property owner on July 10, 2018; work was immediately halted.

A Heritage Alteration Permit application was submitted by the applicant, on behalf of the property owner and received on August 29, 2018. The applicant has applied for a Heritage Alteration Permit to:

- Bring into compliance – with the *Ontario Heritage Act* and policies of the *Downtown HCD Plan* – removal of existing signage and storefront glazing, and the:
 - installation of a new storefront glazing system (Appendix C)
 - new soffit and side alcove tiling
 - new power door operator
 - existing metal trim on either side of storefront opening to remain
 - existing floor tiling to remain
 - installation of new signage within existing signboard (Appendix C)
 - preparation of existing plywood sheathing at signboard to receive new composite backboard for signage
 - *Hardie* board 'Reveal' panel system over existing sheathing with aluminum trim surround
 - new fascia capping signboard
 - new sign graphics

Per Section 42(4) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the 90-day timeline for the Heritage Alteration Permit application will expire on November 27, 2018.

4.0 Analysis

The proposed work outlined in this application complies with the overall approach and guidelines applying to storefronts and building signage in sections 6.1.3.1 and 6.1.3.4 of the *Downtown HCD Plan*. Commercial heritage components and decorative features are appropriately used in the proposed storefront design (i.e. signboard, display windows, retained metal side-trim), as are decorative features used on the signboard (i.e. added fascia). Signage is also limited to the horizontal band over the storefront. The retention of a small recessed entranceway and a high percentage of storefront glazing, strengthens existing downtown patterns and rhythms found in commercial storefronts, helping to foster interest at street level. The proposed signage does not detract from, obscure or destroy any important heritage features and improves the streetscape of Dundas Street. Signage is located where a previous sign was located and fastening does not result in any additional harm to the exterior masonry surface.

5.0 Conclusion

Removal of existing signage and storefront glazing at 187 Dundas Street – a contributing resource in the Downtown Heritage Conservation District – was initiated without a Heritage Alteration Permit. Upgrades proposed to the commercial storefront and signage conforms with the policies and guidelines of the *Downtown HCD Plan*, and it is recommended that the Heritage Alteration Permit application be approved.

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Submitted by:	Gregg Barrett, AICP Manager, Long Range Planning and Research
Recommended by:	John M. Fleming, MCIP, RPP Managing Director, Planning and City Planner

August 28, 2018
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- Appendix A Property Location
- Appendix B Images
- Appendix C Façade Upgrades and Design Proposal

Sources

Baker, M. 2000. A call respectfully solicited: Retailers and their stores. In *Downtown London – Layers of time*, ed. M. Baker, 76-91. London, ON: City of London and London Regional Art and Historical Museums.

London Advisory Committee on Heritage. 2006. *City of London Inventory of Heritage Resources*. London, ON: City of London.

Rice, M. 2009. *Rice's Architectural Primer*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Appendix A – Map

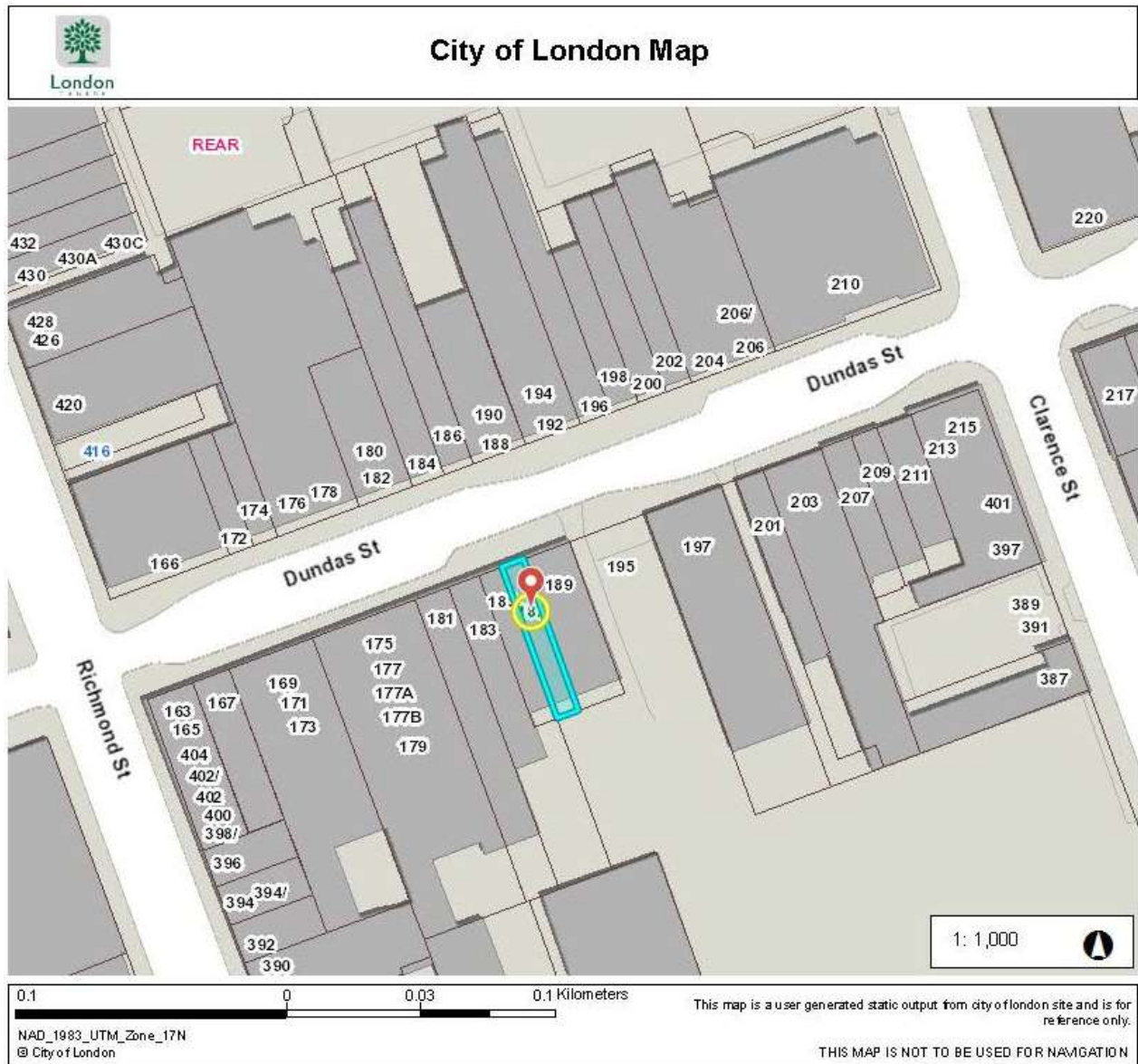


Figure 1: Property location of 187 Dundas Street

Appendix B – Images



Image 1: View Union Block at 183, 185, 187 and 189 Dundas Street (August 9, 2018)



Image 2: View of 187 Dundas Street (August 9, 2018)

Appendix C – Façade Upgrades and Design Proposal