

Report to 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 St. Stephen’s House
at 25 Blackfriars Street, Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage
Conservation District
Meeting on: Wednesday July 10, 2019

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning & City Planner, with the advice of the Heritage Planner, the application under Section 42 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* to alter the porch of the building located at 25 Blackfriars Street, within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, **BE PERMITTED** as submitted in the proposed alteration drawings attached hereto as Appendix C with the following terms and conditions:

- a. No decorative brackets be installed;
- b. The existing dentil details be restored;
- c. Turned, painted wood spindles be spaced no greater than 3” apart on centre;
- d. All exposed wood be painted; and
- e. Display the Heritage Alteration Permit in a location visible from the street until the work is completed.

Executive Summary

Alteration to the porch of the property at 25 Blackfriars Street, a Contributing Resource within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, commenced without obtaining Heritage Alteration Permit approval. Work ceased upon initiation of enforcement action. An agent for the property owner has applied for a Heritage Alteration Permit to alter the porch in a manner compliant with the general guidelines of the *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan* and should be permitted with terms and conditions.

Analysis

1.0 Site at a Glance

1.1 Location

The property at 25 Blackfriars Street is located on the north side of Blackfriars Street between Wilson Avenue and Napier Street (Appendix A).

1.2 Heritage Status

The property at 25 Blackfriars Street is located within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, which was designated pursuant to Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* on May 15, 2015. The property at 25 Blackfriars is a Contributing Resource as identified by the *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan*.

1.3 Description

The building located at 25 Blackfriars Street is a one-and-a-half storey buff brick structure with a gambrel roof that was built in 1905 in the Dutch Colonial architectural style that was popular prior to World War I (Appendix B). The front facade has wood scallop imbrication details above a pair single hung windows in the gables. Brick voussoirs top the two windows and a rusticated stone sill spans the width of both windows at the below. The porch has been enclosed since before 2015 with vinyl siding and aluminum windows and door. The porch roof has retained its gable and decorative detail as well as the dentil detail surrounds the bottom of the porch roof.

2.0 Legislative/Policy Framework

2.1 Provincial Policy Statement

Heritage conservation is a matter of provincial interest (Section 2.d, *Planning Act*). The *Provincial Policy Statement* (2014) promotes the wise use and management of cultural heritage resources and directs that “significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.”

2.2 Ontario Heritage Act

Section 42 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* requires that a property owner not alter, or permit the alteration of, the property without obtaining Heritage Alteration Permit approval. The *Ontario Heritage Act* enables Municipal Council to give the applicant of a Heritage Alteration Permit:

- 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 a request for a Heritage Alteration Permit application (Section 42(4), *Ontario Heritage Act*).

2.3 The London Plan

The policies of *The London Plan* found in the Cultural Heritage chapter support the conservation of London’s cultural heritage resources. Policy 554_ of *The London Plan* articulates one of the primary initiatives as a municipality to “ensure that new development and public works are undertaken to enhance and be sensitive to our cultural heritage resources.” To help ensure that new development is compatible, Policy 594_ (under appeal) of *The London Plan* provides the following direction:

1. *The character of the district shall be maintained by encouraging the retention of existing structures and landscapes that contribute to the character of the district*
2. *The design of new development, either as infilling, redevelopment, or as additions to existing buildings, should complement the prevailing character of the area*
3. *Regard shall be had at all times to the guidelines and intent of the heritage conservation district plan.*

2.3 Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District

The Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District is recognized for its significant cultural heritage value, not just for its individual cultural heritage resources (Contributing Resources) but for the value that they have together, collectively. The goals of the designation of Blackfriars/Petersville as a Heritage Conservation District pursuant to Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* support the conservation of its resources. Specifically for its cultural heritage resources:

Goal: To encourage the conservation of contributing heritage resources including buildings, landmarks, and other structures that contribute to the cultural heritage value of the district by:

- *Encouraging that alterations, additions, and renovations to heritage resources be consistent with the identified cultural heritage value of the area;*
- *Encouraging the maintenance and retention of significant heritage landmarks identified in the district;*
- *Avoiding unnecessary demolition and inappropriate alterations of identified heritage resources that contribute to the heritage value of the district; and,*
- *Encouraging sympathetic design and appropriate alterations when new development is proposed to ensure that there is no negative impact on the heritage value of the area, with particular attention to form, scale, massing, and setback.*

To implement this goal and these objectives, the policies of Section 7.4 (Contributing Resources), Section 7.7 (Residential Area), and the design guidelines of Section 10.3.1

(Design Guidelines – Alterations and Additions) and applicable Architectural Conservation Guidelines of Section 11 were considered in the evaluation of a Heritage Alteration Permit application.

The Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan identifies Contributing Resources and Non-Contributing Resources. The property at 25 Blackfriars Street is identified as a Contributing Resource. Contributing Resources are defined as “a property, structure, landscape element, or other attribute of a Heritage Conservation District that supports the identified cultural heritage values, character, and/or integrity of the H CD. Contributing Resources are subject to the policies and guidelines for conservation, alteration, and demolition.”

The policies of Section 7.4.1 of the *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan* require the conservation of a Contributing Resource and the cultural heritage value of the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District. In particular,

Policy 7.4.1.e *Alterations that have the potential to impact heritage attributes of a protected heritage resource shall not be permitted.*

Policy 7.4.1.i *Major alterations to the exterior façade of a contributing resource shall not be permitted. Such alteration should only be considered where the intent is to conserve the contributing resource.*

Policy 7.4.1.j *Additions or alterations to contributing resources should be sympathetic, subordinate, distinguishable, and contextual in relation to the existing resource and its context, as well as the heritage attributes and cultural heritage value of the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District.*

In the *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan* porches are noted as “additions to the basic house that provide shelter, a place to see from and to be seen in, an semi-public outdoor room largely exposed to passersby where social interaction is possible and encouraged”. The *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan* provides guidelines for porch alterations in Section 11.2.0. The *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan* directs:

- Do not remove or cover original porches or porch details, except for the purpose of quality restoration. Prior to executing any repairs or restoration, photograph the existing conditions and research to determine whether the existing is original or an appropriate model for restoration;
- When restoring a porch that is either intact or completely demolished, some research should be undertaken to determine the original design which may have been much different from its current condition and decide whether to restore the original;
- Fiberglass and plastic versions of decorative trims should be avoided. Poor interpretation of the scale or design of applied decoration detracts from the visual appearance and architectural coherence of porches and verandahs; and,

3.0 Heritage Alteration Permit Application

A complaint from the community brought the unapproved alterations underway to the property at 25 Blackfriars Street to the attention of the City in April 2019. Enforcement action ensued, and alterations ceased.

The Heritage Alteration Permit application was submitted by an agent of the property owner and received on May 7, 2019. The property owner has applied for a Heritage Alteration Permit to:

- Remove the (former) porch enclosure;
- Alter the existing porch with the following details:
 - Construct new railings/guards:

- Turned wood spindles, approximately 30” in height, set between a top and bottom wood rail;
- Railings/guard connected to square wood newel posts at the stairs and to the columns/posts;
- Install new structural wood (6” x 6”) posts and clad with wood on all sizes (resulting dimensions of 8” by 8” square) with wood trim detail at the base and capital;
- New wood stairs with railings/guards to match the porch connected to the square wood newel posts;
- New porch skirting, composed of wood lattice; and,
- New trim and dentil mouldings on the fascia board.

No alteration is proposed to the gable, windows (including transom), door, or brick.

The proposed alterations have not been installed, but the previously enclosed porch has been removed without a Heritage Alteration Permit approval. Because of this, this Heritage Alteration Permit application has met the conditions for referral requiring consultation with the London Advisory Committee on Heritage (LACH) and a decision by Municipal Council.

Per Section 42(4) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the 90-day timeline for this Heritage Alteration Permit application will expire on August 5, 2019.

4.0 Analysis

The policies and guidelines of the *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan* are intended to support the conservation of Contributing Resources and ensure that change within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District is compatible with its cultural heritage values. In the case where a porch has been completely demolished, the *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan* recommends researching the property to determine the original design.

Research was undertaken and no historic documentation (e.g. historic photographs) of the property could be located. The proposed alterations are guided by similar resources in the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District (Appendix D). This is particularly evident in the alterations proposed for the porch and the re-introduction of period-compatible railings. Wood handrails and guards are proposed with turned wood spindles. The spacing of the spindles has been proposed to be tight, less than 3” on centre, which is commonly found by similar styles of historic porches in the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District. No expansion to the size or proportions of the porch is proposed.

However, the decorative brackets that are proposed on the columns push the authentic limits of the proposed alterations. Decorative brackets are not a prominent design feature on similar porches in the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, especially on square columns. New dentils are also proposed around the porch just underneath the roof, however, dentils already exist and should be restored.

The proposed alterations to the guards, handrails, columns, posts, and stairs for the Contributing Resource at 25 Blackfriars Street complies with the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan.

5.0 Conclusion

The proposed alterations seek to bring the existing Contributing Resource into greater compatibility with other Contributing Resources. The proposed alterations should be permitted with terms and conditions to ensure compliance with the policies and guidelines of the *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan*.

This report was prepared with the assistance of Krista Gowan, Heritage Planner.

Appendix A - Location



Figure 1: Property location of 25 Blackfriars Street.

Appendix B – Images



Image 1: Property at 25 Blackfriars Street in 2015, just after the designation of Blackfriars/Petersville as a Heritage Conservation District (courtesy Google).



Image 2: Property at 25 Blackfriars Street in June 2019

Appendix C – Drawings

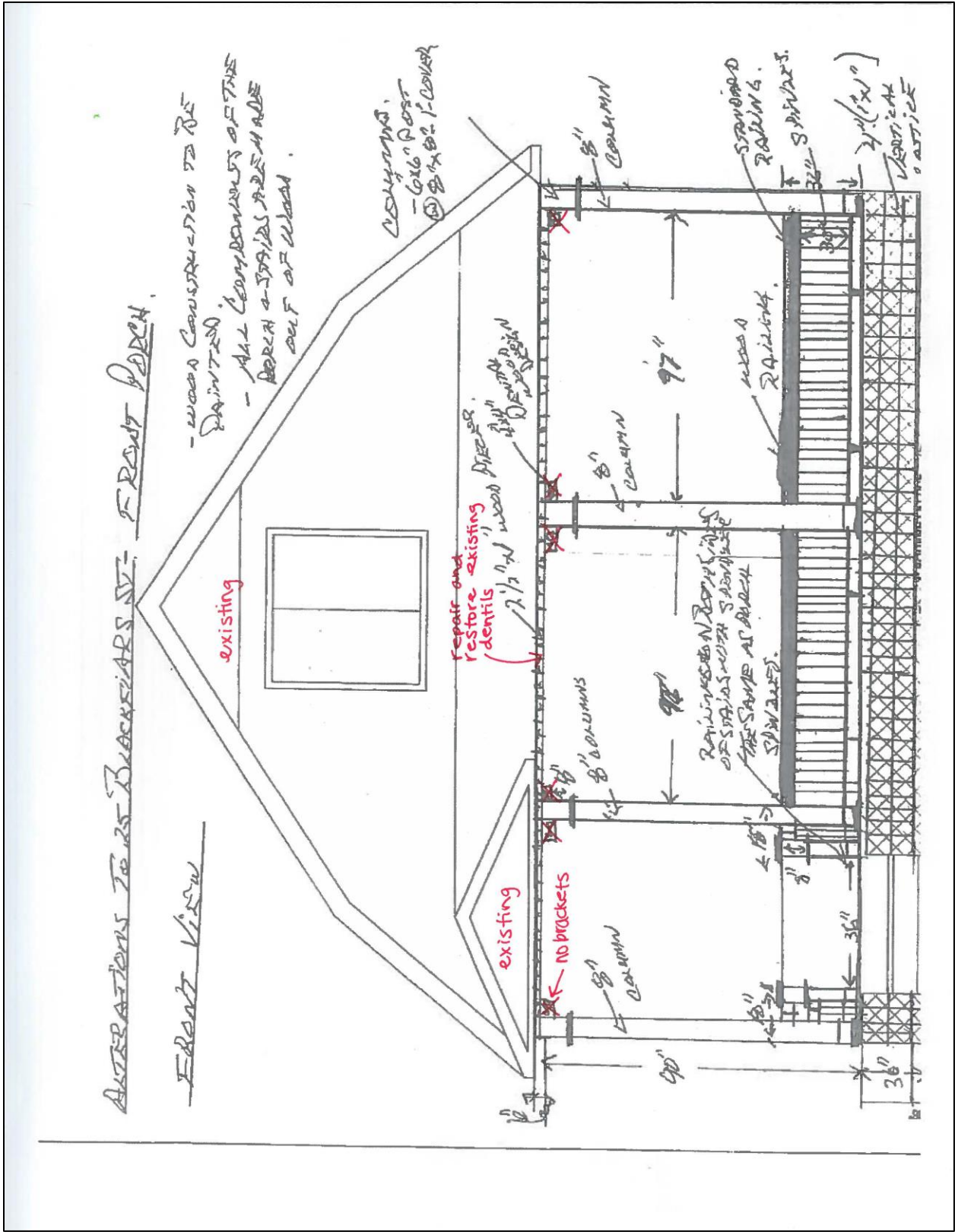


Figure 2: Sketch submitted as part of the Heritage Alteration Permit application for 25 Blackfriars Street, and annotated (in red) to implement the recommended terms and conditions for approval of this Heritage Alteration Permit application.

Appendix D – Style Comparisons



Image 4: Property at 4 Cherry Street, Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, in June 2019.



Image 5: Property at 7 Cherry Street, Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, in June 2019.



Image 6: Property at 8 Cherry Street, Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, in June 2019.