

Report to Planning and Environment Committee

To: Chair and Members
Planning and Environment Committee

From: Scott Mathers, MPA, P. Eng.,
Deputy City Manager, Planning and Economic Development

Subject: Heritage Alteration Permit application by O. Cosme for 19
Blackfriars Street, Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage
Conservation District, HAP23-011-L, Ward 13

Date: Monday March 20, 2023

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Director, Planning and Development, with the advice of the Heritage Planner, the application under Section 42 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* seeking retroactive approval to replace the siding on the dwelling located at 19 Blackfriars Street, within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, **BE APPROVED**.

Executive Summary

Alterations were completed to the Contributing Resource at 19 Blackfriars Street, Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, without Heritage Alteration Permit approval. The alterations included the installation of new exterior vinyl siding over the existing rough cast (stucco) exterior on the dwelling. The removal of the existing vinyl siding would be preferred to reinstate the dwelling to its previous conditions and appearance. However, staff have concerns that the removal of the siding and the strapping may result in irreversible damage to the historic rough cast (stucco), and ultimately risk the conservation of the Contributing Resource. In addition, the colour and style of the vinyl siding is generally consistent with the palette and heritage character of the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District. For these reasons, staff are recommending retroactive approval of this Heritage Alteration Permit application.

Linkage to the Corporate Strategic Plan

This recommendation supports the following 2019-2023 Strategic Plan areas of focus:

- Strengthening Our Community
 - Continuing to conserve London's heritage properties and archaeological resources.

Analysis

1.0 Background Information

1.1 Location

The property at 19 Blackfriars Street is located on the north side of Blackfriars Street, between Argyle Street and Napier Street (Appendix A).

1.2 Cultural Heritage Status

The property at 19 Blackfriars Street is located within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, which was designated pursuant to Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* by By-law No. L.S.P.-3437-179 on May 15, 2015. The property at 19 Blackfriars Street is a Contributing Resource to the cultural heritage value of the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District.

1.3 Description

A one-and-a-half storey vernacular residential-type structure is located on the property at 19 Blackfriars Street. The building reasonably matches the setback of adjacent

properties along the north side of Blackfriars Street. The building was constructed circa 1885; however, it may date earlier, and follows the Ontario Farmhouse type: one-and-a-half storey, central doorway with windows to each side, end-gable roof, and a Gothic Revival peak in the attic storey above the central doorway. The dwelling is of wood frame construction and had been parged in a rough cast (stucco) exterior cladding.

The front porch is a later alteration. The windows of the building had been replaced prior to its designation as part of the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District.

Blackfriars Street (originally “road”) was an important, early transportation route that connected the Wharnccliffe Highway to the Blackfriars Bridge and into the original town plot of London. Twelve property owners of London Township, including John Kent and John Stiles, petitioned that a road be made “from the Town Plot of London to the Proof Line of the township of London.” In 1830, the Surveyor of Highways for the London District, Roswell Mount, laid out what would become known as Blackfriars Street (*Road Report for London District, 1829-1830 #574A*). RP58(W), registered in 1854, laid out the lots of Petersville, north of Blackfriars Street, on the land owned by Samuel Peters, of Grosvenor Lodge (1017 Western Road), for development.

Given its prominent location on Blackfriars Street and confirmed early development in comparable form, it is very likely that the building at 19 Blackfriars Street pre-dates its ascribed circa 1885 dating. *Now and Then, Some Architectural Aspects of London’s Past* (1974) cites the property at 19 Blackfriars Street as an early London version of the “Ontario Cottage.”

2.0 Discussion and Considerations

2.1 Legislative and Policy Framework

Cultural heritage resources are to be conserved and impacts assessed as per the fundamental policies in the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2020), the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and *The London Plan*.

2.2 Provincial Policy Statement

Heritage Conservation is a matter of provincial interest (Section 2.d, *Planning Act*). The *Provincial Policy Statement* (2020) 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” (Policy 2.6.1, *Provincial Policy Statement* 2020).

“Significant” is defined in the *Provincial Policy Statement* (2020) as, “resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest.” Further, “processes and criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest are established by the Province under the authority of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.”

Additionally, “conserved” means, “the identification, protection, management and use of built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained.”

2.3 Ontario Heritage Act

The *Ontario Heritage Act* enables municipalities to protect properties of cultural heritage value or interest. Properties of cultural heritage value can be protected individually, pursuant to Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, or where groups of properties have cultural heritage value together, pursuant to Section 41 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD). Designations pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act* are based on real property, not just buildings.

2.3.1 Contravention of the Ontario Heritage Act

Pursuant to Section 69(1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, failure to comply with any order, direction, or other requirement made under the *Ontario Heritage Act* or contravention of

the *Ontario Heritage Act* or its regulations, can result in the laying of charges and fines up to \$50,000 for an individual and \$250,000 for a corporation.

2.3.2 Heritage Alteration Permit

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 make a decision on the heritage alteration permit application within 90 days or the request is deemed permitted (Section 42(4), *Ontario Heritage Act*).

2.4 The London Plan

The policies of *The London Plan* found in the Key Directions and Cultural Heritage chapter support the conservation of London's cultural heritage resources for future generations. To ensure the conservation of significant cultural heritage resources, including properties located within a Heritage Conservation District, the policies of *The London Plan* provide the following direction:

Policy 594_ Within heritage conservation districts established in conformity with this chapter, the following policies shall apply:

- 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.*

Policy 596_ A property owner may apply to alter a property within a heritage conservation district. The City may, pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act, issue a permit to alter the structure. In consultation with the London Advisory Committee on Heritage, the City may delegate approvals for such permits to an authority.

2.5 Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines

The *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines* includes policies and guidelines related to the exterior cladding including siding and stucco. The policies and guidelines identify wood siding as a popular exterior cladding material, with alternatives such as aluminum and vinyl siding noted within the relevant policies.

Section 11.2.7 (Wooden Siding) states:

Vinyl and aluminum siding are popular now for new construction and renovation because they are very inexpensive materials. They are inexpensive because they are very thin sheet materials formed into planked-shaped profiles and finished in a range of standard colours. They perform well at keeping rain and weather out of the building, but because of the thin nature of the sheet material, they are very fragile in use and prone to damage from impact of vehicles, toys, and ladders used for maintenance. These materials are not recommended to cover or replace original wood siding.

Section 11.2.8 (Stucco) states:

Stucco repair can benefit greatly from modern materials without sacrificing the heritage quality of the restored property. Where repairs are necessary, wood lath can be replaced by galvanized expanded metal lath (diamond shaped mesh) that resists moisture damage, provides improved keying and support for the stucco, and does not impart movement stresses into the stucco finish.

Exterior Insulation Finish Systems (EIFS) are a popular, modern exterior wall treatment that can easily replicate the appearance of traditional stucco with the benefit of increasing the insulation value of the wall. Existing walls (or new) are clad in rigid foam plastic sheets usually about 2" thick, and coated with a mesh-reinforced acrylic stucco. The advantage of the system is the provision of a resilient stucco surface resistant to cracking, and the added insulation. The disadvantages are several. Any existing decorative surface features become buried within the thickness of the coating. Any junctions with existing door and window openings and other trim details usually are replaced with inappropriate stucco returns and thick details. In some cases, where systems are marketed to provide additional thermal protection, evidence indicates that the systems are inclined to be poorly installed and permit water ingress and retention. The supporting structure underneath becomes damaged from the dampness while the exterior shows no signs of the increasingly serious deterioration. The system requires the highest quality of professional design and application to be used in new locations and even more demanding skills if used as a retrofit application.

3.0 Financial Impact/Considerations

None.

4.0 Key Issues and Considerations

4.1. Heritage Alteration Permit application (HAP23-011-L)

In January 2023, the City was contacted by the owner of the property located at 19 Blackfriars Street within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District (HCD). The owner noted that they had recently learned that the property was located within the HCD and advised that they had recently covered the exterior stucco cladding with new vinyl siding. The exterior vinyl siding consists of "Gentek 4.5" Dutchlap" siding.

The removal/installation of cladding/siding, with a different material is a class of alteration requiring Heritage Alteration Permit approval in the *Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines*.

The City received a Heritage Alteration Permit application on February 22, 2023, seeking retroactive approval for the installation on vinyl siding over the existing rough cast (stucco) exterior of the dwelling. Per Section 42(4), *Ontario Heritage Act*, a decision on this Heritage Alteration Permit application is required before May 23, 2023.

The Heritage Alteration Permit application noted that the exterior siding was installed through the use of strapping, an installation technique which see furring strips applied to the existing exterior in order to provide a stable surface or backing for the new exterior cladding to be installed upon. Typically, the installation of strapping requires that the furring strips be affixed to the existing exterior.

Although the removal of the existing vinyl siding would be preferred to reinstate the dwelling to its previous condition, staff have concerns that the removal of the siding and the strapping may result in irreversible damage to the historic rough cast (stucco), and ultimately risk the conservation of the Contributing Resource. In addition, the colour and style of the vinyl siding is generally consistent with the palette and heritage character of

the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District. For these reasons, staff are recommending retroactive approval of this Heritage Alteration Permit application.

Conclusion

The property at 19 Blackfriars Street is a Contributing Resource located within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District, designated pursuant to Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The rough cast (stucco) cladding on the dwelling was covered with vinyl siding without obtaining Heritage Alteration Permit approval in advance of undertaking the alteration. Through this Heritage Alteration Permit application, the owner is seeking retroactive approval for the installation of the new siding material. Due to the potential damage to the dwelling that may come about as a result of removing the new siding material staff are recommending that this retroactive Heritage Alteration Permit application be approved.

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Heritage Planner

Reviewed by: Kyle Gonyou, MCIP, RPP, CAHP
Manager, Heritage

Submitted by: Heather McNeely, RPP, MCIP
Director, Planning and Development

Recommended by: Scott Mathers, MPA, P.Eng.
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Appendices

Appendix A Property Location

Appendix B Images

Appendix A – Location Map



Figure 1: Location map showing the property at 19 Blackfriars Street, within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District.

Appendix B – Images



Image 1: Photograph of the subject property at 19 Blackfriars Street, within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District prior to the installation of the new vinyl siding (2020).



Image 2: Photograph of the subject property at 19 Blackfriars Street, within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District after the dwelling had been re-clad with vinyl siding (2023).



Image 3: Photograph of the subject property at 19 Blackfriars Street, within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District after the dwelling had been re-clad with vinyl siding (2023).



Image 4: Photograph of the subject property at 19 Blackfriars Street, within the Blackfriars/Petersville Heritage Conservation District after the dwelling had been re-clad with vinyl siding (2023).