



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 19, 2009  
Contact: James Boldt  
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RTS No.: 07775  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: July 21, 2009

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: The Director of Planning in Consultation with the Director of Legal Services

SUBJECT: Addition to the Vancouver Heritage Register and Designation - 2356 West 5th Avenue, 'The Blair House'

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A. THAT 'The Blair House' at 2356 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue be added to the Vancouver Heritage Register in the 'B' evaluation category, and be designated as protected heritage property.
- B. THAT the Director of Legal Services bring forward for enactment a by-law to designate the building as protected heritage property.

### **GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of A and B.

### **COUNCIL POLICY**

- *Heritage Policies and Guidelines*

Council's Heritage Policies and Guidelines state that the buildings "*identified on the Vancouver Heritage Register have heritage significance*" and that "*the City's long term goal is to protect through voluntary designation as many resources on the Vancouver Heritage Register as possible.*"

### **PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for addition of the existing building at 2356 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Vancouver Heritage Register in the 'B' evaluation category, and for heritage designation of the building.

## **BACKGROUND**

The site is located in the Kitsilano neighbourhood (see the site map in Appendix 'A') in an area zoned RT-8, which permits infill buildings and the conversion of existing building into multiple suites. The site area is 6,000 sq. ft. The proposal seeks to rehabilitate and add to the existing heritage building and construct an Infill One-Family Dwelling at the rear of the site, as set forth in Development Permit Application number DE412313. No open lane exists at the rear of the site and off-street parking must be provided from the street. In exchange for a modest increase in density and other zoning variances, the Director of Planning is seeking the designation of the building as a condition of the development application approval, which requires that Council add the building to the Vancouver Heritage Register and approve its designation.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Heritage Value**

'The Blair House' was built in 1910 during the Edwardian-era building boom in Vancouver prior to the First World War for its first owner, H.B. Blair. It is an important representation of the economic and cultural evolution of the Kitsilano neighbourhood in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, which at the time was a desirable area at the edge of the city, and is a fine example of the kind of residence which appealed to the emerging middle class of British ancestry during the Edwardian period (see the photos and drawings in Appendix 'B'). The house is valued for its aesthetic and architectural features which are rooted in the Arts and Crafts tradition, including its tall, rectangular massing and moderate pitched roof with wide overhangs, as well as its robust and expressive detailing which includes scroll-cut brackets, notched bargeboards, half-timbered gable ends, projecting three sided bays, exposed rafters, wood soffits, bracketed window hoods, and dental and moulding trims. Also of significance are the squat columns at the front porch. Most of the original window sashes and trims have survived, including finely divided transom sashes. The house was stuccoed in "bottle glass" in the past, most likely in the late 1940's, and preliminary on-site investigation has revealed that the original cladding has survived underneath the stucco.

'The Blair House' is also valued for its association with the architectural firm Gamble and Knapp who designed the building. The firm was only active in Vancouver from 1910 to 1913 but designed some of Vancouver's most distinctive houses, including 'The Hollies' and 'The Macauley House' in the Shaughnessy neighbourhood. The house is also part of a streetscape of similar craftsman houses located on the south side of the 2300 Block of West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, of which five are listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register. Staff and the Heritage Commission have reviewed the heritage assessment of the building and the site and conclude that the stucco only marginally diminishes the building's heritage value and support addition of the building to the Vancouver Heritage Register in the 'B' evaluation category.

### **Incentive Approach and Development Application**

Early reviews of a preliminary proposal indicated that while infill use is permitted in the RT-8 zoning, the proposed infill required variances of the RT-8 guidelines. A modest increase in density beyond what is permitted in the zoning is also proposed. A floor space ratio (FSR) of 0.75 is permitted (4,495 sq. ft.) and 0.76 FSR is proposed (4,557 sq. ft.). The application also proposes to exclude most of the basement of the heritage building for parking (see the density summary in Appendix 'D'). The Director of Planning concluded that a Heritage

Revitalization Agreement is not required and the proposed variances would be considered in exchange for designation of the building. The variances provide an incentive to the owner which makes the designation of the building viable. The development application proposes to remove the stucco, rehabilitate the exterior of the building, and add to the building at the rear. The new dormers at the attic level are designed to not visually detract from the building's character. The building will be kept in place but new foundations will be constructed and off street parking provided in the basement, accessed via a driveway from the street. Staff support the proposed additions to the building, the proposed variances, the addition of 'The Blair House' to the Vancouver Heritage Register in the 'B' evaluation category, and the building's designation.

### Condition of the Property and Rehabilitation Approach

The building is in good condition. Conditions of the development application approval require increased retention of existing windows, in particular the finely divided sashes. Many of the casement sashes are in disrepair and will be replaced with new wood windows to match the existing. The stucco is to be removed and the original siding exposed, rehabilitated, and replaced as necessary. Existing wood details, trims, and brackets will be retained and rehabilitated where possible. Alternatives for exemption from "rain screen" requirements will be exhausted, but if required, the existing cladding will likely have to be removed to install strapping for the required air space. The existing clapboard siding will be reclaimed where possible and re-installed. The shingles and some trims will have to be replaced with materials to match the existing. While the current requirements for "rain screens" have proven to be extremely challenging with respect to the rehabilitation of existing houses, staff conclude that the main heritage characteristics and features of the building will be retained and rehabilitated in a manner consistent with the City's 'Heritage Policies and Guidelines' and the federally adopted "Standards of Guidelines for the Restoration of Historic Places in Canada".

### Compatibility with Existing Zoning and Land Use Regulations

The Intent of the RT-8 district schedule is to:

*"... encourage the retention and renovation of existing buildings which maintain an architectural style and building form consistent with the historical character of the area. Redevelopment will be encouraged on sites where existing buildings are smaller, or do not contribute to this character. For renovations and additions, emphasis is placed on maintaining existing external architectural character; for new development, on compatibility in external character. In all cases, neighbourly building scale and placement is emphasized."*

The proposed rehabilitation of the heritage building is consistent with the zoning regarding retention and renovation of existing character buildings, including the maintenance of the existing external character of the building. The proposed new infill building responds well to neighbouring properties in terms of scale and location, and the design and character of the infill building is consistent with the Kitsilano RT-7 and RT-8 Guidelines. Staff conclude that the proposal is consistent with the intent of the zoning and compatible with neighbouring properties.

## **Results of Neighbourhood Notification and Review of the Application**

Ninety-nine surrounding property owners were notified of the development application and a site sign was installed. Three responses were received. All three expressed concerns regarding tree loss and the impact of the proposed new infill building on the trees to the south of the property. Two of the letters expressed concern about the size of the proposed infill building. One letter supported the retention of the heritage building, noting that it is a relatively unaltered example of the early Kits neighbourhood and that special care should be taken to ensure its heritage features are retained (see Appendix 'E' for a detailed discussion of the results of neighbourhood notification and staff responses).

While some tree loss is inevitable, the proposed landscaping is of high quality and the appropriate number replacement trees will be provided. Requirements of the development application approval will ensure that the cedar trees to the south of the property will be protected. The density of the proposed infill building is consistent with other infill building approved in the area and what is permitted in the zoning. Maximized retention of the heritage features of the building is a requirement of the development application.

Staff conclude that the size of the infill building and the level of proposed tree retention and protection are appropriate, and that the rehabilitation of the building is consistent with current policies and guidelines, and support the project.

## **Comments of the Vancouver Heritage Commission**

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the Vancouver Heritage Commission reviewed the proposed addition of 'The Blair House' to the Vancouver Heritage Register and the development application and unanimously supported the proposal and the addition of the building to the Vancouver Heritage Register in the 'B' evaluation category (see Appendix 'C' for the complete comments of the Commission).

## **Financial Proforma Evaluation**

Real Estate Services staff reviewed the applicant's proforma evaluation in accordance with Council's approved policies. The Director of Real Estate Services advises that the proposed variances requested by the applicant as compensation for the heritage encumbrance on land value are supportable and provide no undue profit.

## **Ecodensity Policies**

Ecodensity policy A-1 "Rezoning Policy for Greener Buildings" is not applicable to the application as an HRA is not required. However, the "Green Homes Program" changes to the Vancouver Building By-law, adopted on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008, will be applicable to the project. Many proposed features will be consistent with the BuiltGreen BC<sup>TM</sup> Gold standard established in the policy. Staff encourage owners for applications such as this to seek registration and certification with BuiltGreen BC<sup>TM</sup>.

## ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

The approval of the report recommendations will have no financial implications with respect to the City's operating expenditures, fees, or staffing.

### *CONCLUSION*

The recommended addition of 'The Blair House' at 2356 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Vancouver Heritage Register in the 'B' evaluation category and the proposed designation will protect the building from demolition or alterations which negatively affect the exterior heritage features of the building, and secure the rehabilitation of the proposed heritage building and enable construction of a new infill building at the rear of the property. The proposed variances provide an incentive which makes designation viable. The owner has agreed to the designation of 2356 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and is prepared to waive future demands for compensation. Therefore it is recommended that Council approve the addition of 'The Blair House' at 2356 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the Vancouver Heritage Register in the 'B' evaluation category and the proposed designation.

\* \* \* \* \*

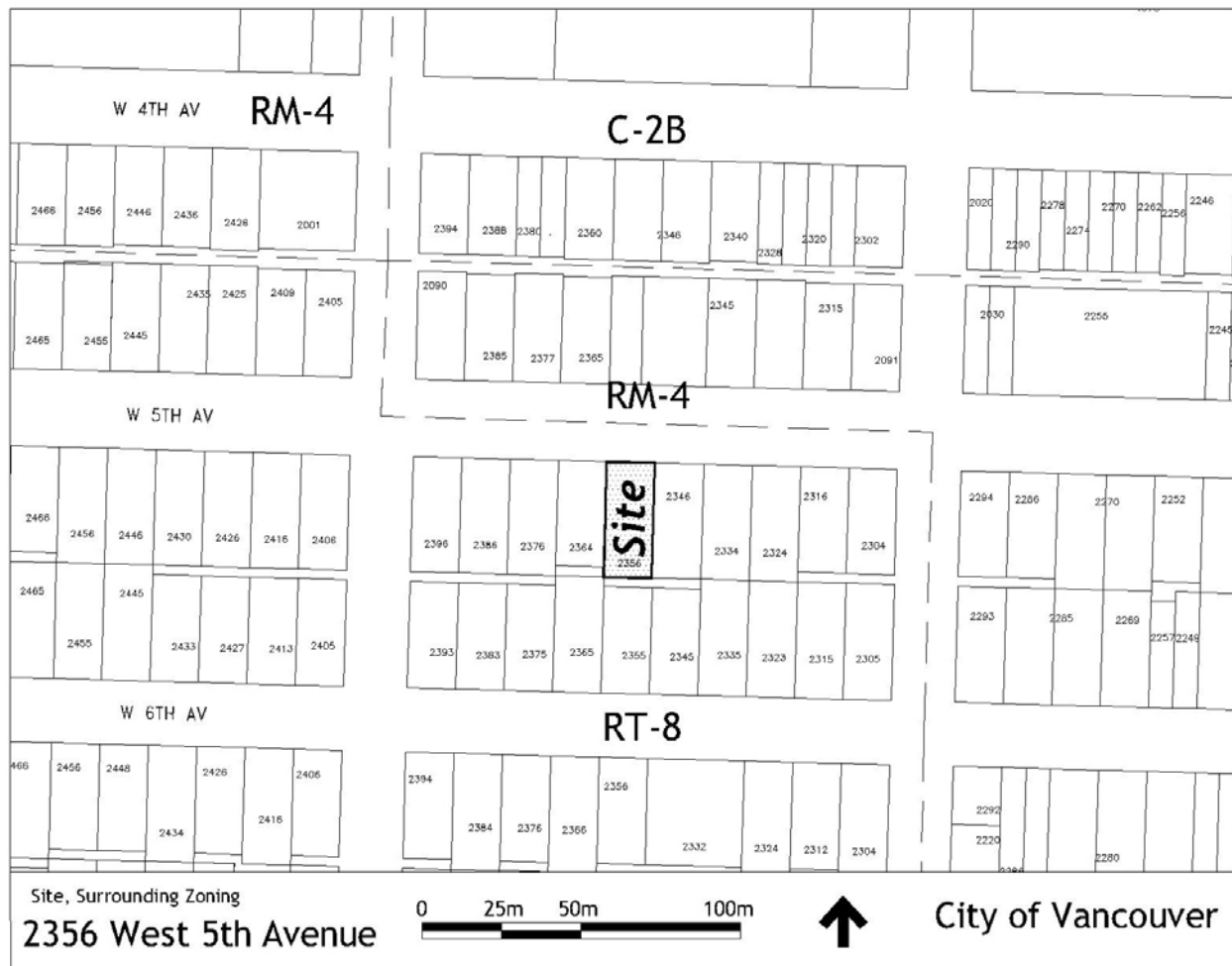




Photo 1: Front View of 'The Blair House' (Looking South)



Photo 2 : East Side of 'The Blair House'



Photo 3: Window Detail (Front)



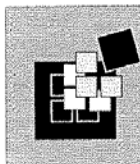


**GENERAL NOTES:**

CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS, DUTY AND LEVELS PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF WORK. ALL DIMENSIONS SHALL BE TO FACE UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED. THE DESIGNER SHALL BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY BY THE CONTRACTOR OF ANY DISCREPANCIES OR OMISSIONS PRIOR TO THE PROTECTION BARRIER BEING INSTALLED AS PER V.B. 84. THE ENTIRE SUBAREA TO BE FINE SPARKLED TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF NFPA 110. WATERPROOF BACKING MATERIAL, BOUND ALL BATHTUBS AND SHOWER ENCLOSURES AS PER V.B. 84. PENETRATED FINISHES TO CONFORM TO THE V.B. 84.







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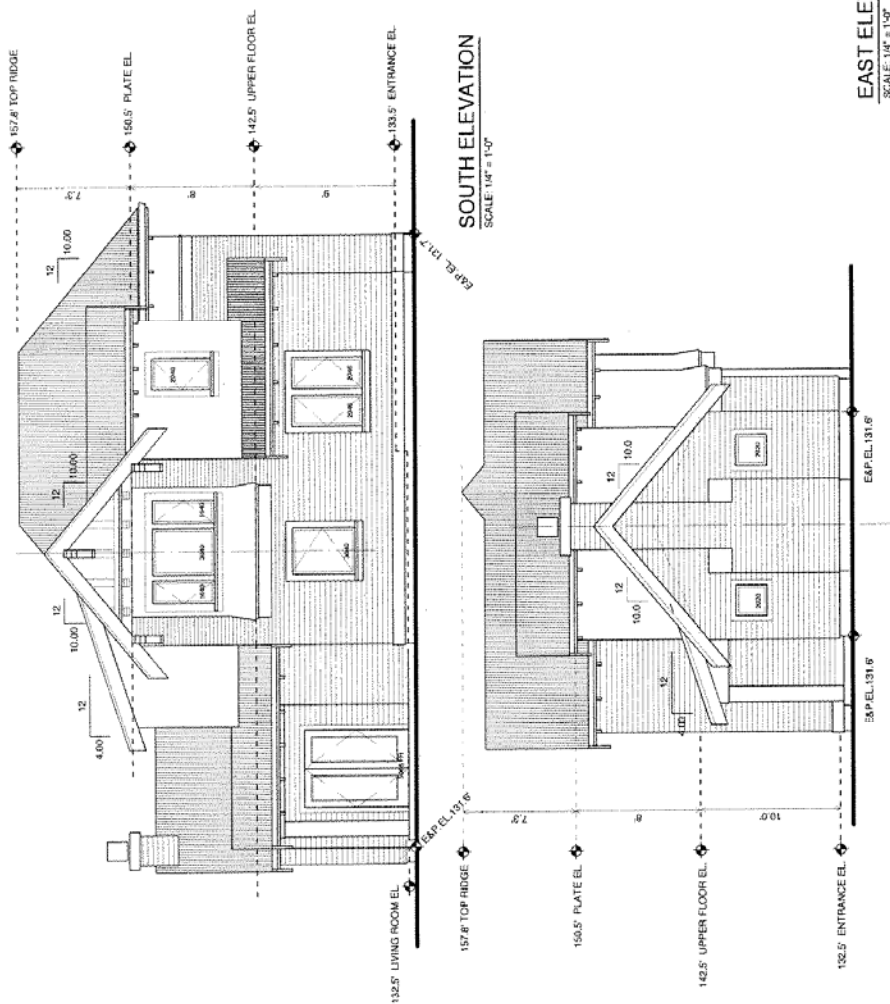
PROJECT: 2356 WEST 5TH AVE.  
VANCOUVER BC

SHEET TITLE:  <b>INFILL HOUSE S &amp; W ELEVATIONS</b>	SCALE	PROJECT NO.
	1/4" = 1'-0" DRAWN AR	CHECKED AR & VZ DATE 28 APR 2004

[illegible]

08 APR 06 PRELIMINARY  
14 MAY 06 REVIEW - PLANNING DEPT  
21 JUL 06 APPLICATION

SHEET NO.  
A-18



ALL NEW WINDOWS IN MAIN HOUSE TO BE VINYL CASEMENT WINDOWS WITH BALANCED SASH/RAILS OF SUBSTANTIAL SECTION. TRUE DIVIDED OR THE EQUIVALENT, TYP. ALL WINDOWS TO HAVE A MIN. 6" COORDINATE LINE THROUGHOUT. TYP.  
ALL ROOF & PORCH SHEETS TO BE 1"x4" TAG CEDAR, PTD. TYP.

**GENERAL NOTES:**

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CONTRACTOR SHALL VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS, DATUM AND LEVELS PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF WORK. ALL ERRORS AND OMISSIONS TO BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE DESIGNER.

MIN. 4" HIGH TREE PROTECTION BARRIER TO BE INSTALLED AS PER VANCOUVER TREE BY-LAW AS INDICATED.

THE INFILL BUILDING TO BE FIRE SPRINKLERED TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF NFPA 13D, SECURITY BLOCKING AT ALL ENTRIES AS PER V.B.84, TEMPERATURE-SENSITIVE MATERIAL, (SHOULD ALL BATHINGS AND SHOWER ENCLOSURES AS PER V.B.84, REFRIGERANT AND FREON ACIDS, TO COMPLY TO THE V.B.84.

PROPOSED NEW INFILL BUILDING-

### Comments of the Vancouver Heritage Commission

The following are the full comments and resultation of the Commissions meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009:

- (a) 2356 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 'The Blair Residence'  
VHR 'B' (proposed)  
DE#412313

#### *Issues*

- (i) support for addition to the Register, and the Draft Register Evaluation;
- (ii) Statement of Significance; and
- (iii) development application.

*Applicant:* Alexandre Ravkov, Alexandre Ravkov Inc.  
Nicolas Santorelli, Nystar Developments Inc.  
Laura Pasacreta, Donald Luxton and Associates Inc.

*Staff:* James Boldt, Heritage Planner

*Staff and the applicant reviewed the application and responded to questions.*

#### *RESOLVED*

*THAT the Vancouver Heritage Commission (VHC) supports the application at 2356 West 5<sup>th</sup>; in particular, support for the addition to the Register and the draft register evaluation, Statement of Significance and the development application as presented including allowances in exchange for designation.*

*FURTHER THAT the Commission directs staff to work with the applicant with the reuse of the multi-sash casement windows with multi-paned transoms.*

*FURTHER THAT Staff work with the application to identify distinguishable as well as compatible characteristics of the new additions and the infill.*

*FURTHER THAT the Commission urge the applicant to include in the Statement of Significance comments about original fenestrations and openings.*

#### *CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY*

The retention of the multi-paned sashes will be required, where possible, as a condition of the development application. A condition of the development application will require there to be greater distinction between the new and existing features. Comments regarding the value of the existing fenestration and openings will be included in the Statement of Significance.

Summary of Proposed Density:

Table 1: Density

Location	Permitted	Existing	Proposed
Proposed Heritage Building	-	3,355 sq. ft. (0.56 FSR)	3,211 sq. ft* (0.54 FSR)
Proposed New Infill Building	-	none	1,345 sq. ft. (0.22 FSR)
TOTAL	4,495 sq. ft. (0.75 FSR)	3,355 sq. ft. (0.56 FSR)	4,557 sq. ft. (0.76 FSR)

*\* the overall density of the heritage building is reduced as the basement (approximately 1,177 sq. ft.) is proposed to be excluded from density for parking and vehicular manoeuvring. A total of 1,034 sq. ft. of floor area is added to the proposed heritage building above the basement area, including 724 sq. ft. in the attic area which currently is not developed.*

## Results of Neighbourhood Notification and Staff Comments

Ninety-nine surrounding property owners were notified of the development application and a site sign was installed. Three responses were received. All three expressed concerns regarding tree loss and the impact of the proposed new infill building on the trees to the south of the property. Two of the letters expressed concern about the size of the proposed infill building. One letter supported the retention of the heritage building, noting that it is a relatively unaltered example of the early Kits neighbourhood and that special care should be taken to ensure heritage features are retained. The concerns and staff responses are noted below:

- (1) The infill building is too large, as are other infill buildings which have been approved and built in the neighbourhood. The size of such infill buildings is invasive and creates privacy impacts. The volume of the attic area on the infill is excessive and should be reduced.*

### Staff response:

Infill buildings are permitted in the RT-8 zoning. The proposed infill building is 1,345 sq. ft. in area. New infill buildings approved in the neighbourhood range from approximately 1,100 sq. ft. (e.g. 2505 West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue) to 1,433 sq. ft. (e.g. 2316 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue). While the infill building is within the 25.2 foot permitted height limit, conditions of the development application approval will require the attic volume and height of the roof of the infill building be reduced. Staff conclude the proposed infill building is within the range of densities commonly approved for infill buildings in the area, and that its design has adequately addressed privacy impacts, and is supported.

- (2) The infill building will result in excessive tree loss on the property and will impact the cedar trees to the south of the property.*

### Staff response:

While some tree loss on the property is unavoidable, conditions of the development approval will require that tree retention is maximized and that trees on surrounding properties are protected, and that an appropriate amount of tree replacement is provided on the site. The rear ten feet of the site is set aside for a future lane dedication and the proposed infill building will not encroach into this area and will therefore be more than ten feet away from the cedar trees to the south of the property (see the Site Plan on page 3 of Appendix 'B'). The City's Landscape Development Specialist staff advise that the cedar trees are unlikely to be impacted by the proposed development and steps to ensure their protection are required as a condition of the development application approval. Staff conclude that the proposed landscaping is of high quality and consistent with the guidelines for the area and is supported.

- (3) The proposed heritage building represents an essentially unaltered example of Kitsilano heritage and is part of a significance streetscape. Its heritage features should be retained, not replicated.*

### Staff response:

Staff conclude that the level of proposed retention is appropriate. Conditions of the development application approval require further retention of existing windows, in particular the finely divided sashes, and other heritage features. Some elements and materials are in disrepair and will have to be replicated if they cannot be rehabilitated. The finely divided



transom window sashes are to be retained and refurbished where possible. Alternatives for Building By-law alternatives and exemptions will be exhausted. If alternatives for “rain screen” requirements are not possible, the existing cladding will likely have to be removed to install strapping for the required air space. The existing clapboard siding will be reclaimed where possible and re-installed. The shingles and some trims will have to be replaced with materials to match the existing. While the current requirements for “rain screens” have proven to be extremely challenging with respect to the rehabilitation of existing buildings, staff conclude that the main heritage characteristics and features of the building will be retained and rehabilitated in a manner consistent with the City’s ‘Heritage Policies and Guidelines’ and the federally adopted “Standards of Guidelines for the Restoration of Historic Places in Canada”.