



Heritage Vancouver

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Canada

October 23, 2018
John Freeman, Project Facilitator City of Vancouver

Re: 325 Carrall Street - DP-2018-00379

Dear John Freeman,

Heritage Vancouver is offering its reserved support in regards to the built heritage aspects of the proposal. Specifically, the conservation plan to retain and restore the two-storey façade of the existing municipally designated Class M Heritage McConnell Building at 325 Carrall Street, and to develop a mixed-use 7-storey building, consisting of 38 secure market rental residential units with commercial uses at grade.

Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada does not consider the retention of a facade of a building as a good conservation practice. However, we appreciate the building has deteriorated to such a point that restoration is not a viable alternative.

Although we are encouraged that the alley wall will be rebuilt with reclaimed brick from the original building, we regret the loss of the historic 'ghost sign', a character defining element on the alley façade, which will disappear when the building is demolished. We strongly encourage the developer to thoroughly document the 'ghost sign' for archival purposes as it represents one of the few remaining historic 'ghost signs' in Gastown.

Heritage Vancouver believes the seven-storey infill development and the addition to be built on top of the McConnell Building are sympathetic to the original building. The choice of dark coloured materials and the plentiful use of glass on the infill and addition will not take the focus away from the restored facade and will allow it to dominate the streetscape.

However, best practices in heritage call for recognition of qualities of place beyond built aspects of the building. As is well known in the Downtown Eastside, the Gospel Mission has occupied the building since the 1940s, serving locals including the neighbourhood's vulnerable residents. The Louvre Hotel and Gospel Mission were named one of Vancouver's 125 "Places That Matter" by the Vancouver Heritage Foundation in 2011 with the [presentation of a plaque](#) celebrating the significance of the mission. We understand that the Gospel Mission has been asked to vacate and relocate. This would be a real loss to this corner in the neighbourhood which has strong associations with help, hope and assistance for disadvantaged residents.

Additionally, Pigeon Park has been identified multiple times in the Downtown Eastside Plan as a Community Identified Asset. The direction the plan has identified for Pigeon

Park includes preserving and improving the social and cultural meaning to the community and identifies throughout the plan, the social impact objectives that developments “do not significantly exclude or negatively impact the low-income community” or “maintain adequate community amenity and gathering spaces to serve the needs of the diverse local population.” The Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley redesign engagement was also framed under such social impact objectives. Under a holistic approach to heritage (as well the social planning for the area), it is important that the development of this corner and in particular the planned commercial uses at grade take these objectives into account. The Gospel Mission would appear to be a compatible tenant for the building while maintaining to some degree a sense of connection for the low-income community to Pigeon Park.

While we do express reserved support for the built heritage aspects of the proposal, we have concerns centering around the social significance of this corner which under best practices and the DTES Plan require attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Yuen', with a stylized, cursive script.

Bill Yuen
Executive Director, Heritage Vancouver Society