



REPORT

To:	Community Heritage Commission	Date:	July 6, 2022
From:	Britney Dack, Senior Heritage Planner	File:	HER00802
		Item #:	[Report Number]
Subject:	9 East Columbia Street (Woodlands Wall) – Heritage Plaque		

PURPOSE

For the Community Heritage Commission to provide feedback on the historic information plaque for the Woodlands Wall which is to be installed as part of a new plaza created through the Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Province is replacing the Pattullo Bridge. The design for the bridge's new landing will change the intersection at McBride Boulevard and East Columbia Street. In September 2021, Council issued a Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) to allow changes to the Woodlands Wall, which is protected by a Heritage Designation Bylaw, as it will be impacted by the intersection's new design.

The design will see a segment of the Wall disassembled and reconstructed further into the Great Lawn park. Also planned is an expansion of the pedestrian plaza between the roads and the break in the Wall, which provides entrance to the park. The approved HAP included two types of interpretive signage to be installed in the plaza: a bronze plaque detailing the historic significance of the Woodlands Wall, and a series of panels showcasing the lives, stories, and experiences of past residents.

The Community Heritage Commission previously reviewed and supported the HAP application. In this report, the text and design for the historic plaque is being presented to the Commission for feedback, comment, and consideration of endorsement.

BACKGROUND

Location

The frontage of the Great Lawn park at 9 East Columbia Street is 316 meters (1,037 feet); the width of the Victoria Hill neighbourhood, which previously comprised the Woodlands institution. The wall which marked the perimeter of the institution runs the entire length of East Columbia Street from the foot of Francis Way on the north-east to a 70 meter (240 foot) return along McBride Boulevard on the south-west. A pedestrian plaza is located at the intersection of McBride and East Columbia at a gap in the Wall, roughly where the original entryway to the Woodlands institution was located.

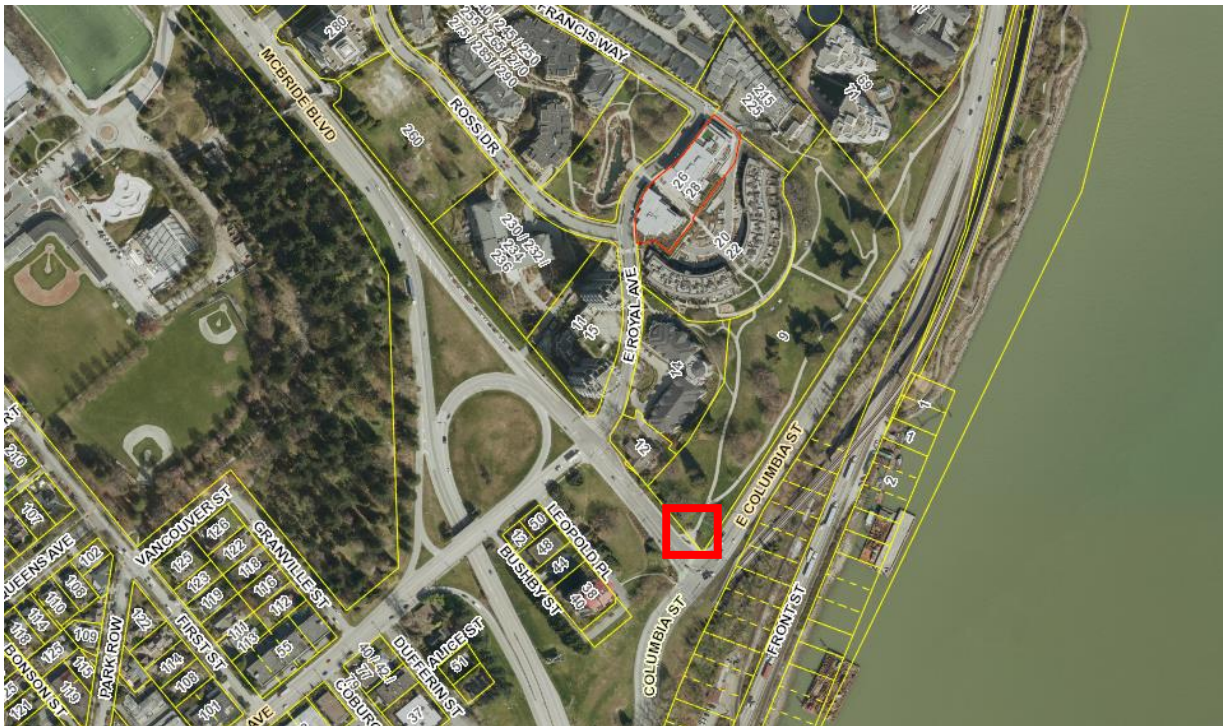


Figure 1: Context map of the intersection of McBride Blvd and E. Columbia St where the plaza location is shown with a red box

Heritage Value

The Woodlands Wall was constructed in 1909. It has a concrete base, on top of which are ornate filigree wrought iron fence panels. The value of the Wall was identified as part of development of the Victoria Hill neighbourhood, at which time the Wall was protected by a Heritage Designation Bylaw (2003). A current photograph of the Wall is below, and archival photos are available in Appendix A.

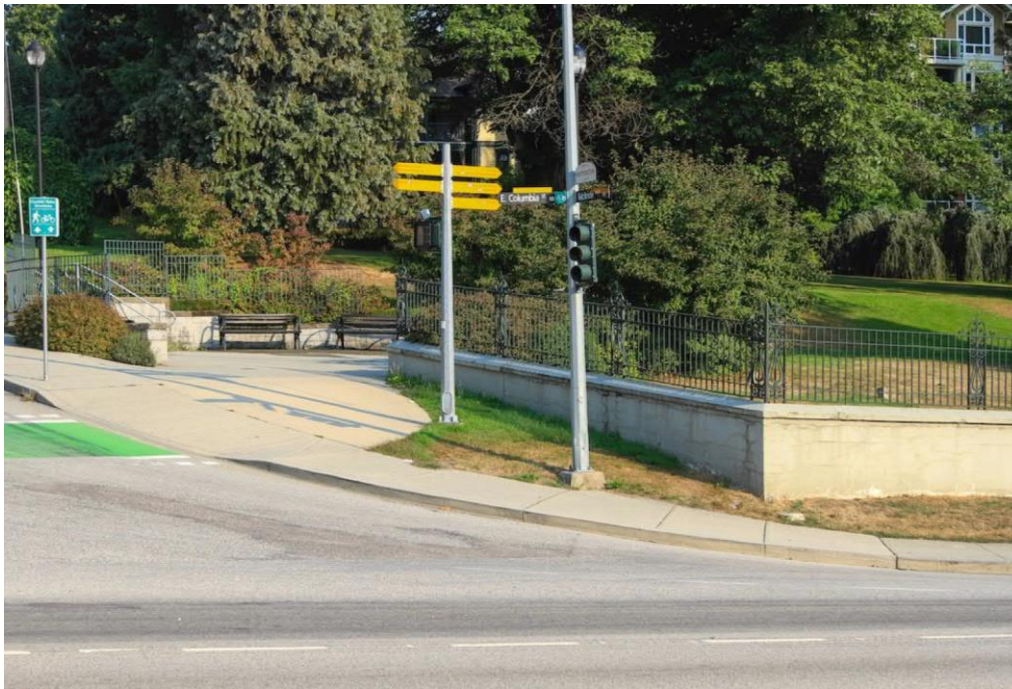


Figure 2: Current photograph of the Woodlands Wall at the intersection of McBride Blvd and E. Columbia St (provided by Fraser Crossing Partners)

The heritage value of the Woodlands site, represented by the Wall, is connected to the history and evolution of mental health care in the province. As stated in the Wall's Statement of Significance (Appendix A), the Woodlands "history offers important lessons about nineteenth and early twentieth century attitudes towards mental health issues, and the development of humane treatment and occupational therapy programs". The site also played an important role in the local community including as a landmark and an employer.

Approved Heritage Alteration Permit

The Province is replacing the existing Pattullo Bridge, and has awarded the contract to build the new bridge to Fraser Crossing Partners (FCP). The design for the bridge's new landing will change the intersection at McBride Boulevard and East Columbia Street, with the primary objective of improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

The intersection's new design will impact the Woodlands Wall, which is protected by a Heritage Designation Bylaw. In September 2021, Council issued a Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) which allows changes to the Wall, and expands the pedestrian plaza between the Great Lawn park and the intersection, near the original entryway to the Woodlands site. The Community Heritage Commission (CHC) provided feedback on and support for the HAP in July, 2021.

The approved HAP includes two types of interpretive signage to be installed in the plaza: a bronze plaque detailing the historic significance of the Wall, and a series of panels showcasing the lives, stories, and experiences of past residents. A rendering of

the plaza design is Figure 3 below. The location and design for the second set of interpretive panels is yet to be determined; the Province and Fraser Crossing Partners are continuing to work with stakeholders on their development. Both the historic plaque and interpretive panels are expected to be presented to Council in the fall of 2022.

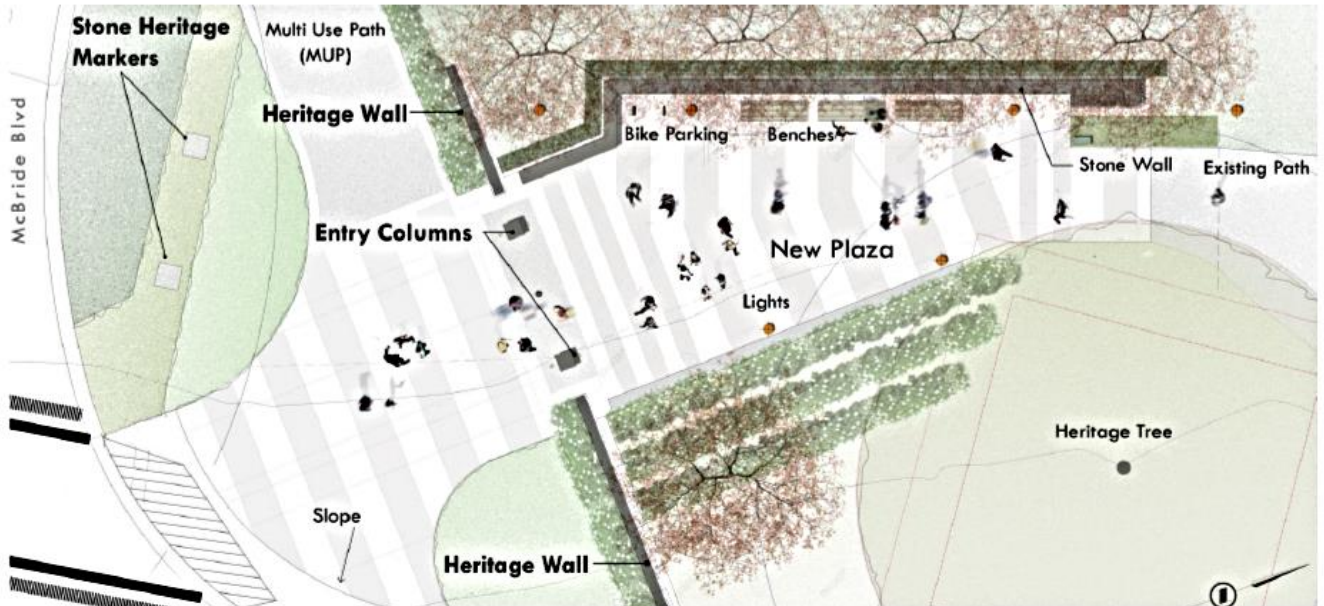


Figure 3: Rendering of the Design for the Expanded Pedestrian Plaza at the Intersection of McBride Blvd and E. Columbia St (provided by Fraser Crossing Partners)

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Historic Plaque

Location

In the 1940s, the original entryway through the Woodlands Wall was altered. In the mid-2000s, as part of the development of the Victoria Hill neighbourhood, entryway columns were remade to mark the original location of the gates. The approved HAP allows removal of the 2000s markers, in favour of new re-creations (labeled “entry columns” in Figure 3 above). These new columns would be located in the plaza in alignment with the new return of the Wall.

The historic plaque would be installed on one of the two re-created entryway columns. The City will provide a Heritage Designation plaque for the Wall, to be installed on the opposite column.

As shown in the plaza design (Figure 3 above), low markers will also be set in the landscaping of the boulevard along McBride (labeled “stone heritage markers”) to indicate the original (1900s) location of the gates, prior to the Wall’s relocation.

Size and Material

The plaque is proposed to be rectangular, approximately 25 cm (9 3/4") wide and 54 cm (21 1/4") tall. The size was generally determined by the dimensions of the re-created entryway column on which it would be mounted.

The plaque would be finished in brushed bronze with raised text and images, and a painted black background. This is very similar to the City's Heritage Designation plaques. A line-drawing image of the original wrought iron gates would be at the top of the plaque, with text below.

Proposed Text

"Replacing an earlier solid wood fence, the Woodlands Wall was constructed in 1909 along the Columbia Street frontage of the former Woodlands institution, and included a short return along McBride Boulevard where the main entrance to the grounds was located. Designated and protected in 2003, the wall is over 300 meters long, and consists of a short concrete base surmounted with wrought iron fencing which was manufactured locally by Westminster Iron Works. The historic entrance at this location included two square concrete columns which supported a large vehicular gate and two small pedestrian gates, though these components were removed between 1948 and 1951. Construction of the Pattullo Bridge replacement necessitated a realignment of a portion of the Woodlands Wall, allowing for a reinterpretation and redress of the wall, entrance, and the former Woodlands institution. The location of the original gate columns are marked in the boulevard several meters to the south."

FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMISSION

The CHC is being asked to provide feedback on the proposed plaque's design and text. The following options are offered for the Commission's consideration, should they wish to endorse the proposal:

- 1) That the Community Heritage Commission support the Woodlands Wall historic plaque as presented; or
- 2) That the Community Heritage Commission support the Woodlands Wall historic plaque if amended to address the feedback provided;
- 3) That the Community Heritage Commission does not support the Woodlands Wall historic plaque as presented at this time and encourages the applicant team to continue to work with staff to further refine the plaque to better address concerns raised in the discussion.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Statement of Significance and Archival Photographs