

REPORT

Climate Action, Planning and Development

To: Community Heritage Commission **Date:** May 4, 2022
From: Amanda Mackaay, Planner **File:** PAR01428
Item #: [Report Number]
Subject: **Pre-Application Review: 319 Governors Court (B.C. Pen Gatehouse)**

PURPOSE

To review a pre-application inquiry for redevelopment of the B.C. Penitentiary Gatehouse which is a protected heritage property.

SUMMARY

A Pre-Application Review (PAR) inquiry has been received for the site containing the B.C. Penitentiary Gatehouse building, located at 319 Governors Court in the Glenbrooke South neighbourhood. The Gatehouse is protected by a Heritage Designation Bylaw (1993). The redevelopment would introduce a 4-storey addition to the side of the heritage building which would be restored and rehabilitated to facilitate its adaptive re-use as a hotel.

GUIDING POLICY AND REGULATIONS

Official Community Plan (OCP) Land Use Designation

The Official Community Plan (OCP) sets out the City's anticipated land uses for the future, for the purposes of guiding development applications. In the OCP, this property is designated for *Mixed use – Low Rise (ML)*. This designation envisions low rise buildings which include commercial (e.g retail or office) and may include residential units. The proposed application is consistent with the OCP's designation for its site.

Zoning Bylaw

The proposed hotel use is permitted under the site's existing Zoning, and the regulations would allow for an addition to the existing building (had the site not been protected a Heritage Designation Bylaw, see below). At this time, there are insufficient

details in the proposal to determine if a rezoning, Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA), or Development Variance Permit (DVP) would also be required to allow the project, or whether the new construction would be approved through a Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP).

Heritage Designation Bylaw

The Gatehouse building is protected under City of New Westminster Heritage Designation Bylaw No. 6132, 1993. This Bylaw is a regulation that places long-term legal protection on the land title of a property. Any changes to the exterior of a protected heritage property must first receive approval from City Council (or its delegate, the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development). Development on this site is not entitled to the owner, but could be permitted by Council, should it appropriately respect the heritage of the site.

Every property protected by a heritage bylaw has a Statement of Significance (SoS) which is a formal document detailing the property's description, its character defining elements, and heritage values. The Gatehouse's SoS is Appendix C. Photographs of the building in its current condition are also in Appendix C.

Heritage Related Design Guidelines

Council endorsed *The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* in 2008 as a basis for assessing heritage projects within the city. These are national guidelines for best practice in heritage conservation and design.

All proposals for changes to heritage sites are carefully evaluated using this document. The guidelines recommend that character defining elements of a protected site (as listed in the SoS) be retained and restored. Additionally, the design of the adjacent new buildings are reviewed against the principles and guidelines in this document. The guidelines recommend that new additions be:

- respectful of,
 - compatible with,
 - subordinate to, and
 - distinguishable from
- the historic elements of the site.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Site Characteristics and Context

The subject property is approximately 4,460 sq.m. (48,015 sq. ft.) in size and is located at 319 Governors Court in the Glenbrooke South neighborhood. The property is surrounded by three and five-storey apartment buildings on the north side of Governors Court and two storey row house developments to the east and west. The primary access is at the rear of the heritage building, located off Governors Court (a

roundabout). This also provides access to the parking lot. At the front of the heritage building is a set of stairs that provide a pedestrian connection down a steep slope to East Columbia Street. A site context map aerial image is provided in Appendix A.

Heritage Value

As this building is protected heritage property by bylaw, its history and heritage value has been recognized, and is described through a SoS (Appendix C). The building is currently 466 sq.m. (5,018 sq.ft.) in size and two-storeys in height, and has housed a number of commercial uses.

The SoS indicates that the original penitentiary was built in 1878; designed by the Canadian Department of Justice. The Gatehouse building was subsequently constructed between 1924 and 1929, symbolizing the growth of the penitentiary during this time period. After the closure of the penitentiary in 1980, many of the buildings were demolished and redeveloped; the Gatehouse is one of the last remaining prison structures preserved on the site.

The gatehouse is noted as having cultural significance due to its contribution to our understanding of the infrastructure and logical operation of Canada's penal system. It has been evaluated as having aesthetic value for its late Gothic Revival architectural influence, featuring battlements, turrets and towers. The building is also representative of the historic use of monolithic cast-in place concrete construction and cladding. More detailed information on the heritage value evaluation is available in Appendix C.

Project Description

The proposed redevelopment of the site would connect a new, 4-storey addition to the east side of the existing heritage building. The heritage building would not be moved or relocated to accommodate the new addition, which is planned to the side, on a portion of the current parking lot. The new addition is planned to be approximately 650 sq.m. (7,005 sq ft.) and therefore larger than the heritage building. The buildings would be connected and the east façade of the heritage building would be visible in an interior atrium.

In the historic part of the development, the proposal contemplates the inclusion of offices, restaurants, and meeting rooms that would be complimentary to the hotel, while approximately 60 hotel rooms would be located in the new wing; the basement is intended to be used for services and "back of house" operations. A preliminary site plan and rendering of the proposal is included as Appendix B.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Heritage Conservation Work

As part of the rehabilitation of the site and integration of a new development, the applicant is proposing to conserve the heritage building as outlined in a Preliminary Conservation Strategy (Appendix C). A summary of the proposed conservation strategy for each character defining element is provide below in Table 1:

#	Character-Defining Element	Conservation Strategy
1	Prominent elevated location on a sloping site, overlooking the Fraser River, on axis with the Wharf Warehouse.	Preserve
2	Institutional form, scale, and massing as expressed by its two-storey height and regular, rectangular plan.	Preserve
3	Reinforced, cast-in-place concrete construction and cladding.	Preserve or rehabilitate
4	Gothic Revival style battlemented exterior elements such as bartizans, turrets and towers.	Preserve
5	Symmetrical fenestration including lancet windows and segmental arched windows.	Preserve or rehabilitate
6	Associated landscape features including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ceremonial staircase leading to the front entry; • A retaining wall / ironwork fence with center steps; and • A concrete fence featuring decorative ironwork and concrete gateposts at steps to main door. 	Preserve

Table 1 - Summary of Proposed Conservation Strategy

Is the conservation work proposed appropriate for this project?

Are there character-defining elements not addressed which could or should be?

Is the Heritage Conservation Strategy sufficiently comprehensive and detailed?

Design Relationship of New Addition

The City's policies, including the Standards and Guidelines, strongly encourage developments which include a historic building to be respectful of the existing heritage assets. Respectful development does not necessarily mean that the site should not be developed, rather that the site or new building's design should consider the heritage building, and allow the heritage building to be the focus of the development. The guidelines identify that new building should not be overwhelming, or detracting from historic features.

The addition is envisioned to have a contemporary feel through the use of simple, rectangular massing intended to reflect the scale and form of the historic Gatehouse building. Glass cladding is proposed for the entirety of the new addition's exterior. The intent of the material choice is to allow for the visibility of the Gatehouse's heritage

characteristics which would ensure the heritage building remains as the primary focus of the development. The proposed design plans including a site plan, elevations, and renderings are provided in Appendix B.

Are the massing, and siting elements of the proposed hotel building compatible with and respectful of the Gatehouse Building?

Does the site plan or the design of the hotel overwhelm the Gatehouse Building?

FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMISSION

The Community Heritage Commission is being asked to review the application in relation to the appropriateness and level of the planned heritage conservation work, and the compatibility of the proposed addition with the heritage building. The Commission is also being asked to make a recommendation on the Pre-application Review inquiry to Council's Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC). The following options are available for consideration by the Commission for that recommendation:

- 1) That the Community Heritage Commission support the preliminary proposal for the B.C. Penitentiary Gatehouse site; or
- 2) That the Community Heritage Commission does not support the preliminary proposal for the B.C. Penitentiary Gatehouse site; or
- 3) The Community Heritage Commission provide alternative feedback, based on their discussion.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Site Context Map

Appendix B: Preliminary Drawings

Appendix C: Preliminary Conservation Strategy and Statement of Significance

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