

# **REPORT**

## ***Development Services***

**To:** Mayor Cote and Members of Council      **Date:** September 13, 2021

**From:** Emilie K. Adin,  
Director of Development Services      **File:** HER 00802  
HAP No. 186

**Item #:** 2021-340

**Subject:** **Heritage Alteration Permit: Woodlands Wall at 9 E. Columbia Street  
(Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project) – Consideration of Issuance**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council issue Heritage Alteration Permit No. 186 for relocation of the Woodlands Wall at 9 East Columbia Street.

THAT Council direct staff to work with the the Reconciliation, Social Inclusion, and Engagement Task Force on the content of the proposed interpretive panels to be located at the historic Woodlands site entrance.

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### **PURPOSE**

To request that Council issue a permit which would allow relocation of a portion of the heritage protected Woodlands Wall as part of the Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

As part of the Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project there will be changes to the intersection of East Columbia Street and McBride Boulevard. The heritage protected Woodlands Wall, located at that corner, is proposed to be modified as part of those changes: approximately 25% of the Wall would be rebuilt further north in the Great Lawn park. This would allow for improved cyclist and pedestrian access and safety at the intersection.

Also as part of the work, the current plaza would be enlarged and would include new interpretive panels and historic markers for the Woodlands' site entrance. The provincial team conducted community consultation on the plans for the Wall and plaza this

summer, and received general support. The Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) required to authorize this element of the bridge replacement project is attached for Council’s consideration as Attachment 1.

**BACKGROUND**

**Site Description**

The Woodlands Wall was constructed in 1909 and is over 300 meters (>1,000 feet) long. The Wall has a concrete base, surmounted with ornate filigree wrought iron panels which are each around 1.4 meters (4.5 feet) high. Information about its physical context in the Great Lawn park at 9 East Columbia Street is available in Attachment 5. Figure 1 below is a current photograph of the segment of the Wall at the intersection of East Columbia and McBride Boulevard.



*Figure 1: Current Photograph of the Woodlands Wall (provided by Fraser Crossing Partners)*

**Heritage Value**

The heritage value of the Woodlands site overall is connected to the history and evolution of mental health care in the province, as well as its being a source of historic growth and employment in the city of New Westminster. This history is physically represented by preservation of various elements from Woodlands including buildings like the Nurse’s Lodge, the perimeter wall (subject of this report) and a marker for the Centre Block building’s location.

As stated in the Woodlands Wall’s Statement of Significance (Attachment 2), 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 history of the site is not always positive but remembering it is important for the New Westminster community and the province.

The value of the Woodlands Wall was previously assessed as part of the process to develop the Victoria Hill neighbourhood in the early 2000s, which resulted in its municipal heritage protection (see below). At their July 7, 2021 meeting, the Community Heritage Commission reviewed and confirmed the Wall’s heritage value in today’s contemporary context. Minutes from that meeting are available in Attachment 3.

### **Heritage Protection**

The Woodlands Wall, the Great Lawn Park, and several significant trees are protected by a Heritage Revitalization Agreement and Designation Bylaw (2003). As a result, a Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) is required in order to permit modifications to the Wall. The HAP for this project is Attachment 1.

Proposed alterations and additions to protected heritage structures are reviewed through this permit process to determine the appropriateness of the proposed changes in relation to the character defining elements of the structure. For an HAP to be approved, the changes proposed should reflect heritage conservation best practice and be consistent with the intent of the heritage protection bylaws.

### **Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project**

The Province is replacing the existing Pattullo Bridge with a new safer and more modern four-lane bridge that improves walking, cycling, and driving. The Province has awarded the contract to build the new bridge to Fraser Crossing Partners (FCP).

Throughout the project, the City, Province, and FCP have been working closely to ensure that the new bridge is successfully integrated into the urban fabric of New Westminster. Collaboration between the City and the Province is guided by a Municipal Agreement that was entered into in September 2019.

The Municipal Agreement includes a requirement for the project team to limit the scope of modifications to the Woodlands Wall as much as is reasonably practical. Additional requirements from the Municipal Agreement relevant to modifications to the Wall are summarized in Attachment 4.

FCP’s design for the new bridge’s landing in New Westminster has an impact to a portion of the Woodlands Wall at the corner of East Columbia Street and McBride Boulevard. A primary objective of the design is improved access and safety for pedestrians and cyclists at this intersection.

## Intersection Safety

Due to the current location of the Wall, there are limited sight lines for vehicles turning right from East Columbia Street onto McBride Boulevard, making it challenging to see pedestrians and cyclists at the northeast corner and as they cross McBride Boulevard. Current restrictions are in place for right turns at this location. However, public concerns and intersection surveys both confirm that some right turning vehicles are not complying with the signal control, and not yielding to pedestrians and cyclists.

A Road Safety Auditor was retained by the Provincial project team to assess the proposed design, as well as other alternatives aimed at reducing the impact to the Wall. The Auditor determined FCP's proposed approach to be the preferred option. City Engineering staff have reviewed the assessment and concur with the conclusions.

The length impact on the Wall was determined by the vehicle site-triangle zone (identified to improve safety at the intersection), as shown with the yellow area in Figure 2 below.

## **PROJECT PROPOSAL**

As required by the Municipal Agreement, Fraser Crossing Partners (FCP) has applied for a Heritage Alteration Permit (Attachment 1) to amend the heritage bylaws that provide formal protection to the Woodlands Wall. If approved, this would allow demolition and reconstruction of approximately 25% of the Wall.

### **Relocation of Wall**

It is proposed that an 85.5 metre (280 foot) length of the Woodlands Wall, including the entire 10.5 metre (34.5 feet) return along McBride Boulevard and 75 metres (246 feet) along East Columbia Street, be relocated north of its current location, as shown in Figure 2 below.

The original Wall is generally straight along both McBride Boulevard and East Columbia Street. The proposed new sections would angle away from East Columbia Street to a higher location on McBride Boulevard. The McBride return would be the most visually changed: it is proposed to be canted (angled) on the corner, and relocated away from its current location at the intersection's curb.

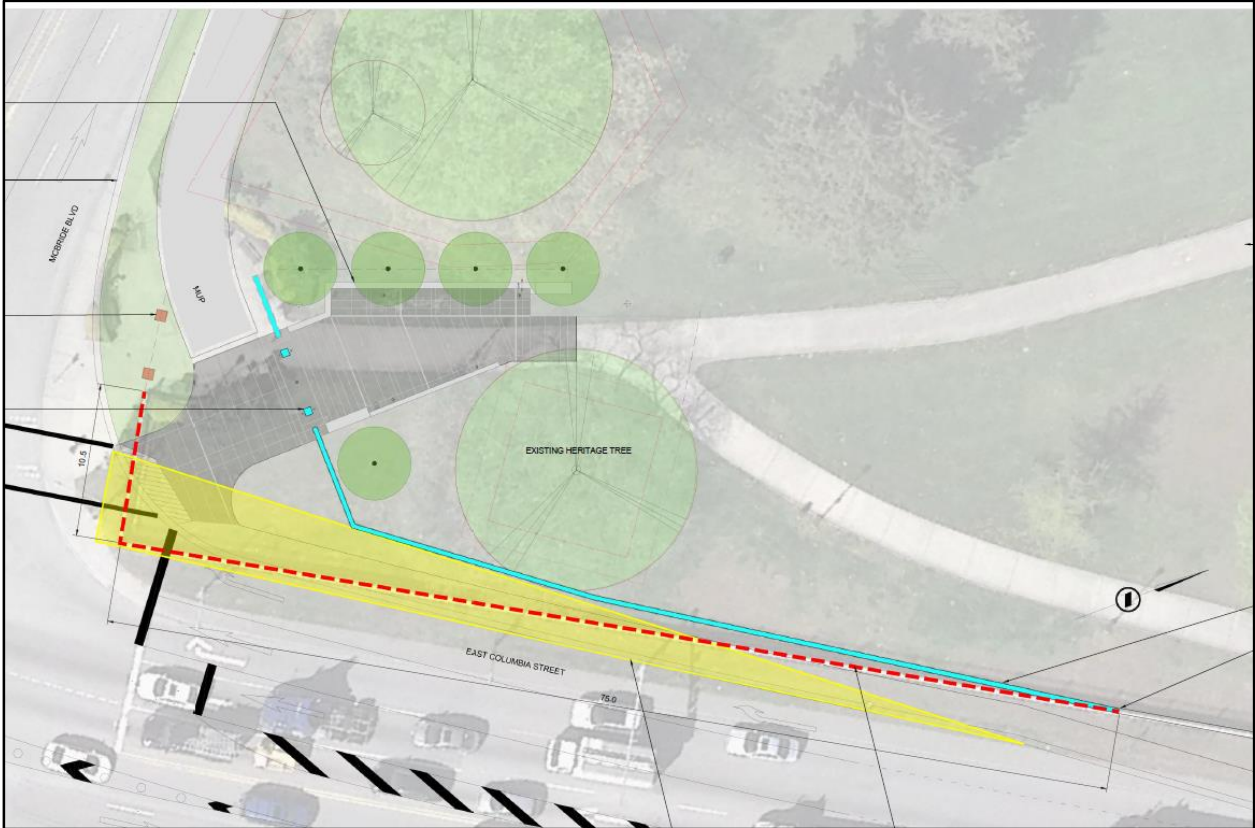


Figure 2: Diagram of proposed wall demolition (dashed red), new wall construction (solid blue), and vehicle site-triangle zone (shaded yellow)

The concrete base of the Wall would be demolished and reconstructed with in-kind materials which would visually match the remainder of the Wall. The majority of the decorative wrought iron would be restored and re-installed on the new base. The Wall would be cut between wrought iron panels, so there would be little visual impact at the point of change. Drainage would be installed along the new section of the wall, preventing future water damage. No heritage trees are proposed to be removed, and impact would be carefully monitored throughout construction.

**Entryway Plaza**

In the 2000s when the Victoria Hill neighbourhood was established, a plaza was constructed at the entryway to the Woodlands site at the corner of East Columbia Street and McBride Boulevard. At that time, the site’s historic gate posts were re-created in the plaza. An image of the current plaza is in Attachment 5.

As part of the Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project, the plaza will increase in size. It will be elongated to connect a new multi-use pathway along McBride Boulevard with the Central Valley Greenway and cyclist access to the new bridge. The new plaza is shown in Figure 2 above in dark grey. The new design also better addresses the steep slope of the intersection and keeps pathways away from the road, with the goal of increased pedestrian and cyclist safety. The final design for the new connections is pending, but

the City is working in collaboration with the Provincial team and community stakeholders as per the Municipal Agreement.

Though the heritage protection bylaws for the Woodlands site do not include the plaza area, the plaza is being designed to highlight the heritage features and related protected trees. The plaza will include:

- new replica gate posts at the entrance to the Great Lawn;
- stone markers for the original gate post location nearer to McBride Boulevard;
- interpretive signage related to the Woodlands Wall and site;
- distinctive paving and retaining walls which reflect the Wall and the Woodlands Center Block marker (tying the two sites together);
- seating areas for rest along the multi-use path and for contemplative thinking in the space;
- retention of all heritage trees; and
- re-use of remaining non-restored wrought iron from the Wall in the landscaping.

Stakeholder groups have already provided some feedback related to the language and content of the signage. This new signage would be guided by the Provincial team’s heritage consultants as well as be based on learnings from, and references to, the signage at the nearby Woodlands Centre Block (installed in 2016). This signage is not expected to be as extensive as the Centre Block’s.

As the plaza and interpretive signs do not form part of the HAP (Attachment 1) which Council is considering through this report, staff propose that the drafts of the signage be workshopped with the Reconciliation, Social Inclusion, and Engagement (RSIE) Task Force as part of the City’s continued involvement in their design.

**REVIEW PROCESS AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**Review Process**

The Heritage Alteration Permit application was reviewed as follows:

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Date (2021)</b>
Application and inter-departmental staff review	March-May
Preliminary report to Council	June 21
Applicant-led community consultation	July-August
Council’s consideration of permit issuance	September 13 <b>(we are here)</b>

**Consultation Events**

The applicant-led consultation included three components through which there was felt to be general support for the proposed changes at the intersection. Each component of the consultation is listed and described below. For further details, see the applicant’s summary of their consultation program which is included as Attachment 6.

1. Community Heritage Commission (CHC) Review

The CHC moved a recommendation of support for the HAP and the new plaza design. Minutes from the meeting are available in Attachment 3.

2. Stakeholder Workshops

- a. New Westminster Heritage Preservation Society
- b. Community Living Society
- c. Inclusion BC

Comments received from the above groups have been incorporated in the proposal. Interest was shown by both Inclusion BC and the Community Living Society to continue engagement as the content of the interpretation panels and markings in the plaza evolve. Both organizations noted that it is important to involve survivors and their families in those discussions. FCP is working with these groups and the City towards completing the panel text in the spring of 2022.

3. Online Open House and Public Survey

Approximately 30 people attended the online open house and 14 comment cards were submitted in the following weeks. There was some concern for how the historical significance is understood and how it will be appropriately and respectfully represented in the final design of the plaza, and several technical comments were received related to plaza design. Overall there was support for alterations to the Wall.

**NEXT STEPS**

Should Council issue the Heritage Alteration Permit, the project would proceed as follows:

<b>Next Step</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>
Building Permit for the Wall	Construction likely to begin in spring 2022	With supervision from the project’s heritage professional and arborists
Design of Interpretative Panels	Ongoing fall 2021-spring 2022 with installation in mid-late 2022	With City staff and RSIE Task Force, and stakeholder groups
Finalization of Entry Plaza Design	Spring-summer 2022	With City staff as part of the multi-use path and intersection design

**INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

A project team has been established for the Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project that includes multiple staff from the Engineering, Parks and Recreation, Development Services, and Electrical Departments. The project team has been involved in the review of the design details of the intersection and the new entry plaza.

**OPTIONS**

The following options are available for Council's consideration:

1. That Council issue Heritage Alteration Permit No. 186 for relocation of the Woodlands Wall at 9 East Columbia Street.
2. That Council direct staff to work with the Reconciliation, Social Inclusion, and Engagement Task Force on the content of the proposed interpretive panels to be located at the historic Woodlands site entrance.
3. That council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend options 1 and 2.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Heritage Alteration Permit No. 186, 2021

Attachment 2 – Woodland's Wall Statement of Significance

Attachment 3 – Excerpt of Minutes from the July 7, 2021 Community Heritage Commission Meeting

Attachment 4 – Municipal Agreement Expectations Regarding the Woodland's Wall

Attachment 5 – Site Characteristics and Context Information

Attachment 6 – Applicant's Consultation Summary

**APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:

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This report was reviewed by:

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This report was approved by:

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Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer