

# **REPORT**

## ***Climate Action, Planning and Development***

**To:** Community Heritage Commission      **Date:** June 1, 2022

**From:** Amanda Mackaay, Planner      **File:** OCP00036  
HER00830

**Item #:** [Report Number]

**Subject:** Heritage Revitalization Agreement Application: 501 Fourth Avenue and 408 Fifth Street (Holy Eucharist Cathedral)

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### **PURPOSE**

To review the application's heritage elements and provide a recommendation to Council.

### **SUMMARY**

The site containing the Holy Eucharist Cathedral at 501 Fourth Avenue and 408 Fifth Street is proposed to redevelop. The 1968 Holy Eucharist Cathedral would be retained in its current location, be legally protected with a Heritage Designation Bylaw, and listed on the City's Heritage Register. The project would also include the construction of a five-storey, low-rise building on the west of the site (transitioning down to one-storey) and a two-storey residential building on the north of the site. An Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment and Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA), must be approved by Council to allow the project.

The Commission is being asked to review the heritage value of the cathedral and consider the appropriateness of its long-term legal protection, as well as evaluate the heritage conservation work to the exterior of the building that is proposed as part of the project. The Commission is also being asked for feedback on the design of the surrounding new buildings, and how they relate to the heritage elements of the site.

## **GUIDING POLICY AND REGULATIONS**

### **Official Community Plan (OCP)**

#### **Land Use Designation**

An OCP Amendment will be required to facilitate this development as it is not consistent with the “Residential – Detached and Semi-Detached Housing (RD)” land use designation for the site. However, the proposal meets a number of Council priorities, for example, the City’s Family-Friendly Housing Policy, Secured Market Rental Policy, and Childcare Strategy. Council endorsed staff’s recommendation to proceed with processing the application at their April 25, 2022 meeting.

The benefits provided through this project are beyond what would typically be expected under the HRA program alone, which is why an OCP amendment is also being considered; in addition to the protection of a heritage asset, this development would increase non-profit childcare spaces from 22 to 74, and provide 14 new secured market-rental units.

#### **Queen’s Park Heritage Conservation Area**

501 Fourth Avenue was exempted from the Heritage Conservation Area policy due to its previously existing institutional use. Though the house at 408 Fifth Street was built in 1907, it was evaluated in 2018 and is now classified as a non-protected property. No further heritage review of the house would be required prior to its demolition.

### **Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA)**

A Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) is a negotiated agreement between the City and a property owner for the purposes of heritage conservation. In exchange for long-term legal protection through a Heritage Designation Bylaw and exterior restoration, certain zoning relaxations may be considered. The *Policy for the Use of HRAs* lays out the process for HRAs and the zoning relaxations which may be considered. In this case, the HRA is being used both for relaxations related to incentivization of the heritage elements, and also like a rezoning, to permit a different building form.

#### **HRA Refresh**

In June 2021, Council launched the HRA Refresh: a program to update the City’s *Policy for the Use of HRAs*. The focus of the HRA Refresh will be those areas and building forms designated “Detached and Semi-Detached” and “Ground Oriented Infill” in the OCP—this includes houses, suites, laneway/carriage houses, small lots, duplexes, triplexes, and other low-density infill.

Though HRA applications in the Queen’s Park neighbourhood are not currently being accepted, pending the results of this policy work, the application for the Holy Eucharist

Cathedral site is outside of the scope of the policy work, and was one of several in-stream projects which Council allowed to continue through the review process.

### **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 Statement of Significance) 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 buildings on a site with historic ones be:

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

### **Heritage Designation Bylaw**

A heritage asset which is the subject of an HRA is also protected by a Heritage Designation Bylaw. This Bylaw is a regulation that places long-term legal protection on the land title of a property. Any changes to a protected heritage property must first receive approval from City Council (or its delegate, the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development) through a Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP). Future development is no longer entitled, but could be permitted by Council with an HAP. HAP applications are also evaluated by staff against the Standards and Guidelines.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Site Characteristics and Context**

The subject site is located on the western edge of the Queen's Park neighbourhood and Heritage Conservation Area, though neither property is protected under that policy. The site is approximately 2,243 sq.m. (24,140 sq.ft.) in total, relatively flat, and made up of four lots. The Holy Eucharist Cathedral is located on the site over two of the lots. A house, lane, and parking lot make up the remainder of the site.

The west side of Fifth Street consists primarily of protected heritage houses. The two corners across Fifth Street to the east are three storey apartment buildings. The site is one block west of the Sixth Street; part of the region's frequent transit network (FTN) and a commercial precinct. A site context map aerial image is provided in Appendix A.

## **Project Description**

The proposal is for the site to include three buildings: the existing three-storey (plus a central cupola) cathedral, a new five-storey mixed use building, and a new two-storey residential rectory, or “manor” building. The cathedral would remain in situ and is not proposed to be expanded as part of the project. Through the application, the community functions provided by the church would be formalized in the site’s zoning. The five-storey mixed-use building is proposed for the west side of the site and the three-unit rectory would be located on the north of the site, fronting onto Fifth Street, replacing an existing house. Parking for all buildings and uses is being accommodated on-site. The proposed building’s massing generally fits the immediate context, including the higher density buildings and mixed uses on Sixth Street, one block to the west, and two existing three-storey apartment buildings across Fifth Street, and transitions in scale to surrounding lower density uses. Project drawings are provided in Appendix B.

### Zoning Bylaw

The overall proposal is not consistent with the existing institutional (P-1) and single-detached dwelling (RS-4) zoning and would require site-specific relaxations to the Zoning Bylaw. An HRA is proposed to permit the proposal. Some of the zoning changes proposed include land use, and massing elements such as building height. These elements of the project will be evaluated by the Advisory Planning Commission and New Westminster Design Panel, respectively.

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **Heritage Value of the Cathedral**

A Statement of Significance (SoS) has been prepared for the cathedral, which is available in Appendix C. The cathedral is more than fifty years old (built in 1968-69), and as such, qualifies to be considered for heritage value. The SoS indicates that the cathedral is historically significant as it symbolizes the history of the local Ukrainian Catholic community. It was began serving as the headquarters for the Eparchy in British Columbia in 1974. It is noted as having cultural value for its role in preserving Ukrainian culture, language and traditions by providing religious and community space for the Ukrainian diaspora in Canada.

The Cathedral has also been evaluated as having architectural significance for its Modern, mid-century interpretation of a traditional Byzantine basilica, featuring a simplified, rectangular form, copper-clad domed roof, and colorful byzantine icons and wood-carved furnishings. It holds further value for its association with its designer, Bing Gregory Marr, who was one of the first registered Chinese-Canadian architects in BC.

More detailed information on the heritage value evaluation as well as current and archival photographs of the building (pages 5 to 16) are available in the Heritage Conservation Plan in Appendix C.

*Does the Statement of Significance provide an accurate representation of the heritage values of the building?*

*Is the heritage value of the house sufficient to warrant long terms legal protection and heritage status through a Heritage Designation Bylaw?*

## Heritage Conservation Work

As part of the rehabilitation of the site and integration of a new development, the applicant is proposing to preserve and rehabilitate the cathedral as outlined in a Heritage Conservation Plan (Appendix C). A summary of the proposed conservation procedures are provide below in Table 1 and the proposed maintenance plan in Table 2:

Building Element	Action	Detail and Material
Entrance Podium	Rehabilitate	Reconstruct entrance stair and podium, and connect via a walkway to new mixed-use building; eliminate final three stairs at church doors to enhance accessibility.
Metal Railing	Restore	Restore metal railing across entire front of podium either with original sections, or through replication.
Exterior Stucco	Preserve and Repair	Spot repair damage to exterior stucco finish by matching specific original texture.
Window Glass	Preserve and Repair	Replace broken window panes with textured blue glass; restore opening/closing mechanisms; outfit upper opening window with bird screens.
Front Door Assembly	Restore	Restore wood front door and sidelights to original 1968 design.
Roof and Rainworks	Repair	Repair and optimize roof drainage to prevent water pooling and leakage.
Choir Loft	Rehabilitate	Rehabilitate the use of the choir loft as a flex-space, separable from the church interior with sliding glass windows.
Energy Efficiency Improvements	Rehabilitate	Introduce some new higher-tech technologies and materials to improve energy efficiency and comfort levels in the church.

Table 1 - Summary of Proposed Conservation Strategy

Building Element	Proposed Action
Site	Ensure runoff drains away from buildings; maintain clearance between vegetation and the building face; manage vegetation near or attached to building.
Foundation	Monitor for signs of undue settlement, deformation or cracking; ensure functionality of perimeter drainage; inspect basement for moisture infiltration.
Stucco	Investigate origin of water infiltration; preservation of historic stucco where possible when repairing; repaint in accordance with historic colors in Conservation Plan or HAP.

Wood Elements	Annual inspection of wood elements for signs of deterioration; take corrective repair/replacement action
Windows and Doors	Replace cracked/broken glass; check condition and operation of windows/doors/hardware; lubricate hardware annually to prevent rust/breakage; inspect weather stripping.
Roof and Rainwater Works	Inspect roof condition every 6 months; clear debris from roof and ensure drains are clear; annually inspect and clean cupola gutters; plan for roof replacement every 18-22 years.
General Cleaning	Regular cleaning of building exterior, windows, doors and rainwater works using gentle, low-pressure hose.

Table 2 - Summary of Proposed Maintenance Plan

*Is the conservation work proposed appropriate for this project?*

*Is the maintenance plan proposed appropriate for this project?*

*Is the Heritage Conservation Strategy sufficiently comprehensive and detailed?*

## **Design Relationship with the Mixed Use and Manor Buildings**

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.

### Mixed Use Building

This project proposes a five-storey mixed use building located on the western edge of the property with the intention of allowing the church to remain as the most prominent feature on the site. The new lobby of the church would be connected to the second floor of the mixed-use building via the existing podium structure. The design, materiality and colours are intended to take inspiration from the cathedral. The fiber-cement and aluminum composite paneling is proposed to distinguish it as a contemporary building. The finishes and details of the mixed-use building are intended to be simpler to remain subordinate to the church.

Levels three, four and five have a smaller floorplates to "step back" from the cathedral. The east side of the building is set back approximately 3 meters (11 feet) at the third floor up to 6 meters (19 feet) at the fifth floor, with the goal of reducing the appearance of massing and bulk against the church in accordance with the City's design guidelines.

*Are the massing and siting elements, and materials for of the proposed mixed use building compatible with and respectful of the cathedral?*

### Manor Building

The manor building will be constructed on the northeastern edge of the site. The manor house would have a flat roof and rectangular, horizontal massing to remain compatible with the cathedral, but the shingled cladding and residential form is intended to distinguish it from the cathedral and tie into the residential neighbourhood beyond. Proposed as two-storeys, the manor house is smaller in size and height than the cathedral building.

*Are the massing and siting elements, and materials of the proposed manor building compatible with and respectful of the cathedral?*

*Do the massing and siting elements, and materials appropriately relate to the neighbouring houses protected by the Queen's Park Heritage Conservation Area?*

### **FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMISSION**

The Community Heritage Commission is being asked to review the application and provide feedback in relation to the following elements:

- The heritage value of the cathedral, and prepared Statement of Significance;
- The appropriateness and level of the planned heritage conservation work;
- The appropriateness of the proposed maintenance plan; and
- Any heritage implications related to the design of the site, mixed-use building or manor house.

The Community Heritage Commission is also being asked to provide a recommendation to Council on this application, based on its heritage merits. The following options are offered for the Commission's consideration:

- 1) That the Community Heritage Commission recommend that Council support the Heritage Revitalization Agreement for 501 Fourth Avenue and 408 Fifth Street and its inclusion of the cathedral on the City's Heritage Register; or
- 2) That the Community Heritage Commission recommend that Council does not support the Heritage Revitalization Agreement for 501 Fourth Avenue and 408 Fifth Street and inclusion of the cathedral on the City's Heritage Register; or
- 3) The Community Heritage Commission provide alternative feedback, based on their discussion.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: Site Context Map

Appendix B: Select Project Drawings

Appendix C: Heritage Conservation Plan and Statement of Significance

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