

Oct 19, 2018

Aaron Murnaghan, MCIP, LPP  
PRINCIPAL PLANNER, HERITAGE  
HERITAGE OFFICER, PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
PO BOX 1749, HALIFAX NS B3J 3A5

1 Starr Lane, Dartmouth, NS  
B2Y 4V7

CONTACT  
Rob LeBlanc  
president  
t 902 461 2525

**Re: 2438 Gottingen Street - Heritage Impact Assessment.**

Dear Aaron;

The following Heritage Impact Assessment is presented as part of the Heritage DA application on behalf of the client Joe Arab in October of 2018. This brief presents the history of the building compiled from a few notable sources, a summary of the Second Empire style which characterizes the building, relevant policies from the Federal Heritage Standards and Guidelines which influenced the design approach for the proposed development and an overall rationale for how to merge the new building while conserving the old building. The overall strategy is to restore the traditional structure of Victoria Hall (the Gottingen Street portion) and to add the modern tower addition behind the structure; removing the later Second Empire addition that was added in 1914.

Victoria Hall is a municipally registered heritage property and a jewel in the heritage network of Halifax; having survived the Halifax Explosion so close to the site at the Narrows. Though HRM has undertaken many smaller Heritage DA projects, this project represents the first project that will preserve a large historic building to leverage the density that could be built on the site if the existing building were not present. We recognize this is a careful balancing act. It will be \$2-3m to restore the existing building and front yard site back to its former condition (the owners gathered 3 quotes in advance). The additional density is needed to pay for the restoration. The Standards and Guidelines provide the best context for guiding the design integration of old and new.

**Victoria Hall History (aka Home for the Aged and Old Ladies' Home) - by James Frost, Oct 2018**

The Home for the Aged established in 1860, changed name to Old Ladies Home in 1906, and to Victoria Hall in 1970. The Home for the Aged was established a group of middle class Protestant women, and given momentum by a donation of \$4,000 from William Murdock of Halifax, on condition that a similar amount be raised by the community; another \$1,000 of support came from Isabella Cogswell, who hosted several fund-raising meetings at her home on Argyle St. The building was built in 3 months and the endowment fund was actually oversubscribed, amounting to \$17,000. Cogswell was a prominent philanthropist and property investor, whose father Henry had been the first president of the Halifax Banking Company, an MLA and member of the Legislative Council.

Originally opened in a building called the Golden Hall in 1860, with room for 10 women. In 1862 it purchased the present property for \$3,200. An extension on the house cost of \$1,200; 24 more women moved in. The home prospered for next two decades but there was more demand than space.

In 1880, the Committee purchased the property at the rear of the home for \$950. In 1884 it was

---

Landscape Architecture

Planning

Architecture

Civil/Transportation Engineering

---

decided that a new building was required. The main house was demolished leaving only the recently-built extension. While the new building was under construction William Cunard offered them rent-free use of his large house on Brunswick St.

Henry Frederick Busch (1826-1902) was chosen as architect to design a “plain, but neat and substantial” building. His other buildings included converting the original Supreme Court building into the Legislative Library, the Halifax County Jail, Oaklands (the home of William Cunard), the Halifax Protestant Industrial School, the Halifax High School, the Halifax Poor Asylum and the bandstand at the Halifax Public Gardens.

It was later described as “a superb example of Second Empire with a central cupola and flamboyant roofscape with dormers...and a mansard roof”. It has also been described as being typical of the French Chateau style. “On the second storey of the projecting frontispiece there is a superb Palladian window. Classical pilasters flank the front entrance, and pediments cap the windows on the ground floor. The interior is spectacular with many signature details” of the architect.

Main contractor was J.F. Corstan; cornerstone laid by Lt. Governor Matthew Richey on June 2, 1885 and officially opened by mayor James MacIntosh on January 15, 1885. It cost \$12,000 to build. In 1906 (another source says 1937) the name was changed to Old Ladies Home. In 1914 an extension was built on the south side and the architect was Sydney P. Dumaresq, the son of James Charles Dumaresq. During the Halifax Explosion, the building remained intact, but many windows were shattered; residents found temporary shelter at Fort Massey church in the south end. None of its residents were killed. Repaired with aid provided by the Boston Relief Fund. It cost \$13,000 to repair it, more than the initial cost of construction. In 2009, there were 37 residents, ranging in age from 70-100. Governance remained the same throughout, with a six-member Board of Trustees and a 16-member Committee of Management.

### **VICTORIA HALL - 2438 GOTTINGEN STREET : Written and Researched by Irene Fennell, July/88 for City of Halifax, Development and Planning Department and Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia**

Victoria Hall was built in 1885 by J. F. Carston. This two and a half storey wooden structure with a mansard roof was designed by the architect Henry Frederick Busch. The building is a superb example of the Second Empire with a central cupola and flamboyant roof scope with dormers. The cornerstone was laid by the Lt. Governor Matthew H. Richey, Q.C., on July 2, 1884 with the usual ceremony of enclosing a history of the institution and various other items inside the stone. Rev. D. Hill, Rector St. Paul’s Church, conducted the proceedings. Among those present were Sir William Young, Hon. Dr. Parker and lady, Prof. Rev. Forrest, Mr. R.W. Fraser, committee members and the trustees. Thanks were given to all its members and friends of the society. The Home for the Aged was opened by Mayor MacKintosh on January 16, 1885.

Henry Frederick Busch (1826-1902) was a well known architect of Halifax who was born in Hamburg, Germany. He came to Halifax circa 1860 and became associated with the well known Dartmouth architect Henry Elliott (1824-1892). They had their offices on Bedford Row. Later the firm dissolved partnership but Busch retained an office in the building until his death. Busch was responsible for buildings such as the first Victoria General Hospital and Nurses Residence (Morris Street), St. Andrew’s Church, Tobin Street, Band Stand at the Public Gardens, and the estate of the Cunard family, Oaklands. Elsewhere in the province he designed the Luthern Church and the Court House in Lunenburg, he also designed the Normal College in Turuo and the Pictou Academy in Pictou. He married the daughter of Captain John Skinner, his son Walter Johannes Busch (1865-1924) was also a well known local architect.

The founding principles of the home were intended to afford a comfortable retreat to respectable women of advanced years whose livelihood was very limited. The applicant had to prove that they had no immediate family to support them. Their rent of fifty dollars a year was paid by a sponsor. Quite often the home became a refuge for minister’s widows who were experiencing financial difficulties. Women who were accepted into the home had to have a good bill of health, but if one became ill there was a very competent medical staff which volunteered its services to the Home.

The Home for the Aged was established in 1860 and was first located in the residence called the Golden Ball on Gottingen. Influential donors such as William Murdoch, Isabell Cogswell, and Enos Collins donated large amounts of money in the home's early stages. This money was used to run the day-to-day expenses of the home. The endowment fund enabled them to buy the Senator's home and was eventually used to supplement the building fund for the present house.

Isabel Binney Cogswell (1819-1874) the daughter of the Hon. Heziah H. Cogswell (1776-1854) initiated the idea for a Home for Aged Women. She influenced William Murdoch and Enos Collins to give large donations and matched Murdoch's contribution of \$4,000. She persuaded the Rev. Richard Fitzgerald Uniacke (1797-1870) and his wife to become actively involved in the society. Rev. Uniacke was the Rector of St. George's Church for forty-five years (1825-1870), the son of Attorney General Richard John Uniacke (1753-1830) and Martha Delesdernier. Uniacke Square is named after Richard Fitzgerald Uniacke.

The name of Isabel Cogswell was for many years a household word in Halifax. Her noble life may be regarded as one of the blessed results of her brother William's ministering, as one of the most remarkable examples of Evangelical revival. With the death of her brother Rev. William Cogswell (1809-1847) (Curator of St. Paul's Church) she swore to devote her life to good works in memory of his teaching. She was twenty-seven at the time. Isabell Cogswell never married and devoted herself to the convictions of her faith. Sadly, in 1874 while spending two weeks nursing a very sick family she contracted meningitis and tragically died in December of that year.

She is also known for her part in founding the Boys Industrial School, the Girls Industrial School and The Orphan's Home leaving large donations in her will to each of them. Her middle name Binney is most likely given to her to commemorate another well known philanthropist of Halifax Edward Binney.

William Murdoch (1800-1866) a leading dry goods merchant spent his life attributed to good works throughout the City. Coined "Father of Philanthropy"; he never married and left thousands of dollars to charities throughout Halifax. The Blind School (University Avenue) got its start from his generous donation (\$20,000) as did the Deaf and Dumb Institute (\$20,000). He was a very rich man who never lost his sympathy for poor men. This was his most redeeming quality his entire absence of self worth that wealth often brings along with it. Prior to his retirement (c. 1860) Mr. Murdoch offered to donate the sum of \$4,000 towards the founding of an "Old Ladies Home" provided the people who solicited his subscription succeeded in raising a like amount. Murdoch was born in Scotland and came to Halifax to open a dry goods business with his brother, Charles, in 1821. His brother, Charles Murdoch, (1816-1875) was also known for his benevolence and was one of the founding Trustees of the Home. Hon. Daniel McNull Parker, M.D. (1822-1907), was a medical attendant and one of the founding Trustees of the Home. He was the only founding member left on the Board to see the new building erected (Edward Binney 1812-1878) and Charles Murdoch 1816-1875/78 were replaced by Mr. R. James Sweet and James Farquhar.) Subscriptions for the building fund were obtained through the painstaking efforts of Dr. Parker and Rev. Dr. Hill. Dr. Parker was the son of Francis Parker of Walton, N.S. Dr. Parker was an outstanding surgeon and physician. He practiced for fifty years in Halifax during the period 1845-1895, earning for himself the title "Dean of Canadian Medicine". Dr. Parker was active in all aspects of community and medical life. He was involved with many good works such as the Deaf and Dumb Institute, The Industrial School, and the School for the Blind. He was also a founding member of the Canadian Medical Association and is responsible for developing reputable hospitals in Halifax such as the Victoria General and the Infirmary. Parker was a strong advocate for hospital improvement in Halifax and sat there hospital boards. His opinion was highly regarded in all circles.

Other medical attendants to the Home were Dr. Alexander Forrest (1806-1875), Dr. James C. Hurne and Dr. John F. Black. The Rev. Dr. John Forrest, M.D. (1842-1920) and his daughter, Miss Forrest took active parts in the Home. Rev. Forrest was the son of Dr. A. Forrest and was the Third President of Dalhousie University (1890-1916), and he was also involved with the Deaf and Dumb Institute, the Infant's Home and School for the Blind. Miss Forrest was the secretary of the Home when Victoria Hall was being built.

Of the thirty-five ladies who composed the first committee only six were still serving at the time of the new building; they were: Mrs. George H. Starr, Mrs. w. s. Stirling, Mrs. R. James Sweet, Mrs. James Liddell, Mrs. R. w. Fraser, and Miss Antoinette Nordbeck (1815-1898). Miss Nordbeck was the daughter of Peter Nordbeck, (1789-1861) the renown silversmith and jeweller of Nordbeck & Co., she never married and lived at Studley (now Dalhousie Campus). The home itself was lighted with electricity in June of 1899. Then in 1904 a new wing was added to the Home - three stories lighted by electricity and heated by hot water. The contractor was William Lownds and the plans by architect Herbert Gates. Herbert Gates was a prominent local architect known for the Roy Building and the Technical College on Spring Garden Road.

The Home's name was changed to Victoria Hall in 1970 and serves as an apartment building for elderly women. Victoria Hall is a unique shelter for women unable to maintain their own homes. Its residents are usually outgoing people who, for the most part, are able to take care of themselves. The Hall offers, shelter food and familiar surroundings to women aged sixty-five and up. The facility offers woman a home until ill health forces them to seek a hospital or nursing home. Victoria Hall has seen Halifax's elderly women through the Halifax Explosion, the Great Depression and Two World Wars and still remains true to its original purpose providing elderly women with a low cost friendly home.

### Architectural History of Victoria Hall

At the time of Confederation in 1867, Victorian Stylist Revivals like the High Victorian Gothic style of the Canadian Parliament buildings (Fuller & Jones, 1859-66), were still atypical except in major public building projects or large expensive residential projects around the country. Around 1870, the French "Second Empire Style" became popular in both Canada and the US adopted from the Second Empire in France of Napoléon III. The French First Empire collapsed in 1815 and when the monarchy was restored, and the Second Empire was led by Napoléon III, nephew of Napoléon I, from 1852 to 1870. This style was often very lavish, grand and complex and is readily visible by its rich sculptural elements and its Mansard Roof (sometimes made of slate) as well as other Victorian era features. In Canada, the style was particularly appreciated in the design of lavish houses, hotels, railway stations, city halls and other notable public buildings. An early example is the federal Customs House at the port of Saint John, New Brunswick (McKean and Fairweather, 1877-81). Larger public buildings were often made of a local quarried stone demonstrating tremendous strength and permanence, but on smaller wood buildings and residences, the style is less elaborate, but is still very ornate with many of the same notable features as the stone building counterparts. Windows are generally high with elegant surrounding moldings and there is always a Mansard roof punctuated with gabled or elliptical dormers. Roofs and balconies are generally embellished with iron cresting, and the roof itself is often dichromatic (use of two colours of tile, brick, or slate used on a surface).

From 1885 to 1895, around the time Victoria Hall was constructed, the economy of Canada was in a period of relative prosperity. This was also a period when the profession of Architecture was rapidly organizing in Canada. The Ontario Association of Architects formed in 1889; similar bodies began in Québec and British Columbia in 1890-92. A professional journal, Canadian Architect & Builder, began in 1888, and the first architectural school in a Canadian university opened at McGill in 1896. In Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Association of Architects (NSAA) was founded later in 1932; empowered by the provincial Architects Act.

Second Empire style is characterized by the following elements:

- » *Plan : Usually a central hall plan, often becoming asymmetrical with additions of rooms and porches. Often a three or five bay facade with center entrance.*
- » *Doorway: Not a dominant feature of the facade. With the exception of bracketing, detail was minimal.*
- » *Windows : Slender and elongated windows. Dormer windows became universal in a variety of shapes ( rectangular, pointed, gabled, and rounded ) and were often ornamented with pediments and brackets.*
- » *Roofline : High slate mansard roof maximized available floor space.*
- » *Materials : Primarily wood or brick. Flatboards common on the facade.*
- » *Decoration : Ornate moldings and brackets. Spacious porches and verandas.*



Mansard roof with "bellcast" profile



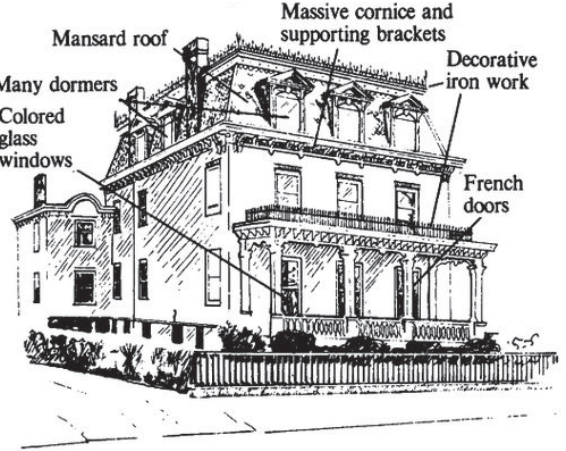
Dripstone hood molding

Mansard roof  
Massive cornice and supporting brackets

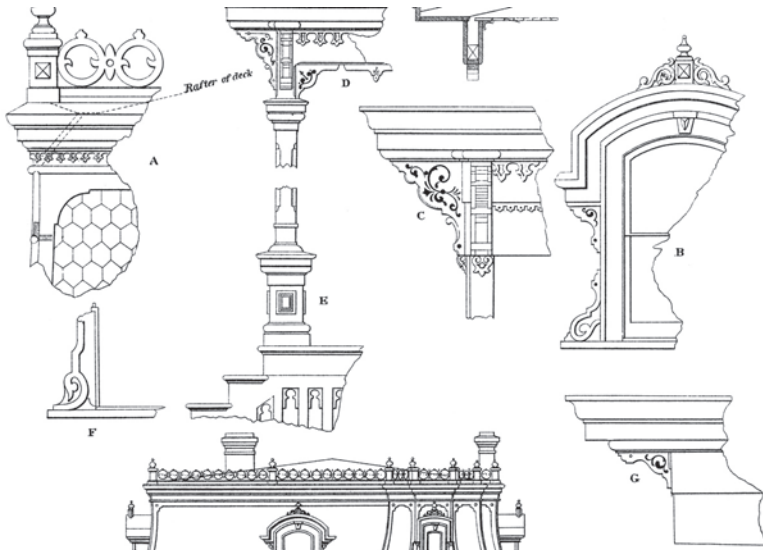
Many dormers  
Colored glass windows

Decorative iron work

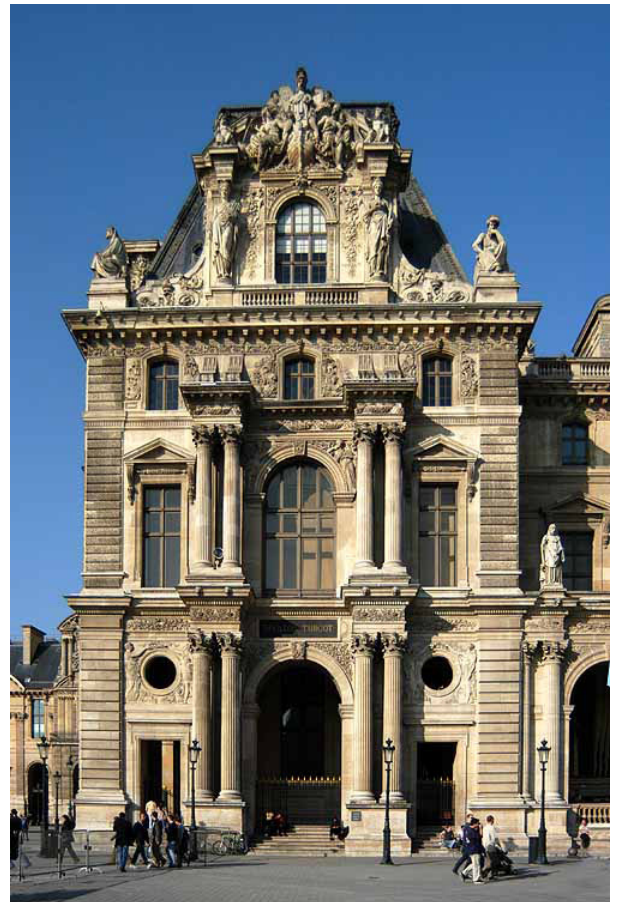
French doors



MANSARD ROOF  
DECORATIVE SLATE ROOFING  
DORMERS  
DEEP BRACKETED EAVES  
BRACKETED WINDOW HOODS  
PROJECTING PORTICO  
CORNER BOARDS  
SILL BOARD  
PAIRED DOORS & WINDOWS  
HIGH FOUNDATION



Side Elevation.  
Scale finish - one foot.



Paris Opera House - France. Early Second Empire

Plate 1. Front elevation, scale  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. = 1 foot. Plate 2. Side elevation. Plate 3. Section and Plans.  
A, Deck Cornice of main house. B, Dormer Window. C, Cornice of main house. D and E, Cornice, column and pedestal of piazza on main front. F, Window sill. G, Small bracket to main cornice. Scale, half-inch to one foot. Cost, with modern improvements, \$5300.



Second Empire Examples in Canada





## Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada is a manual used by all levels of government in Canada to conserve historic buildings, structures and landscapes. While the focus is on preserving, rehabilitating and restoring heritage structures, the guidelines also provide guidance on how coordinate additions or alterations to the existing structure. For the purpose of this project, there are very little drawings, photos or oral history of the original 1885 structure. An exhaustive search in the NS archives, the municipal archives, Parks Canada archives and newspaper archives has not revealed any photos, sketches or architectural drawings prior to 1950. For this reason, we anticipate the best approach would be a rehabilitation rather than a restoration since there is not enough information to restore the building back to any original condition.

The general standards from the manual that apply to this project include:

### General Standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation and Restoration

1. Conserve the heritage value of an historic place. Do not remove, replace or substantially alter its intact or repairable character defining elements. Do not move a part of an historic place if its current location is a character-defining element.
  - » *In regard to Victoria Hall, the character defining elements are the Gottingen Street face of the building and the front yard area of the building. Since no original drawings exist, we might surmise that a ladies senior home might include garden elements in the front yard. We might recommend plant species that would have been available for use prior to 1900. The granite walls would need to be repointed and the ironworks shown replaced (the current seating nature of the wall may be better suited to today's use rather than replacing the original fence).*
2. Conserve changes to an historic place that, over time, have become character-defining elements in their own right.
  - » *Wood windows, corbels, roof details, porch and portico, landscape gardens, entry walls, stairs.*
3. Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention.
  - » *Exterior interventions will be consistent with the standards and guidelines.*
4. Recognize each historic place as a physical record of its time, place and use. Do not create a false sense of historical development by adding elements from other historic places or other properties, or by combining features of the same property that never coexisted.
  - » *The addition will be located behind Victoria Hall and will not be physically attached to the Hall so it is clear that the new development is not part of the history of this building.*
5. Find a use for an historic place that requires minimal or no change to its character-defining elements.
  - » *The use will continue to be housing. We will have to address handicap access in the future renovation.*



Victoria Hall - Circa 195

6. Protect and, if necessary, stabilize an historic place until any subsequent intervention is undertaken. Protect and preserve archaeological resources in place. Where there is potential for disturbing archaeological resources, take mitigation measures to limit damage and loss of information.

» *An Archaeological impact assessment will be part of the development permit for this development. Monitoring during construction will also be part of the development.*

7. Evaluate the existing condition of character-defining elements to determine the appropriate intervention needed. Use the gentlest means possible for any intervention. Respect heritage value when undertaking an intervention.

» *Heritage restoration experts rather than generalist contractors will be hired to do the restoration of Victoria Hall. This will include the restoration of the rear facade once the 1914 addition is removed.*

8. Maintain character-defining elements on an ongoing basis. Repair character-defining elements by reinforcing their materials using recognized conservation methods. Replace in kind any extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements, where there are surviving prototypes.

» *A maintenance program will be part of the development once it is rehabilitated.*

9. Make any intervention needed to preserve character-defining elements physically and visually compatible with the historic place and identifiable on close inspection. Document any intervention for future reference.

» *This will be part of the rehabilitation process by the heritage restoration experts.*

#### **Additional Standards Relating to Rehabilitation**

10. Repair rather than replace character-defining elements. Where character-defining elements are too severely deteriorated to repair, and where sufficient physical evidence exists, replace them with new elements that match the forms, materials and detailing of sound versions of the same elements. Where there is insufficient physical evidence, make the form, material and detailing of the new elements compatible with the character of the historic place.

» *This will be central to the rehabilitation process.*

11. Conserve the heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to an historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place.

» *No additions are proposed to Victoria Hall unless a new elevator is needed to make it accessible. The north face of the building (right side of the building) could be developed into an elevator shaft, however a full life safety and code analysis will be undertaken in the detailed design stage to determine the more detailed fire safety requirements under the alternate building code guidelines.*

12. Create any new additions or related new construction so that the essential form and integrity of an historic place will not be impaired if the new work is removed in the future.

» *The addition is being proposed for the back of the development and the visible portion from Gottingen Street is proposed as a small plate size for the tower and significant glazing is proposed to make the building light and transparent. The colours proposed for the addition are muted as opposed to the highly chromatic colours of Victoria Hall. The vertical nature of the tower directly contrasts the horizontal nature and proportions of Victoria Hall. The Creighton Street facade is proposed as a 2 storey street wall with a third storey hidden in a modern Mansard. The overall goal is to maintain the rhythm and continuity of the street fabric on Creighton Street.*

The Standards and Guidelines provide additional guiding principles for the future development of Victoria Hall. The following principles have been derived from the manual to guide this development.

» *Preserve and restore the character defining elements of the original Second Empire building.*

» *Determine whether the improvements to the building are a Preservation, a Rehabilitation or a Restoration project.*

» *document, identify, survey and analyzing the form, materials and condition (and function and interrelationships, where applicable) of the historic place and its components before the project work begins.*

» *Balance health and safety (building code, accessibility, etc.) and other issues with conservation objectives*

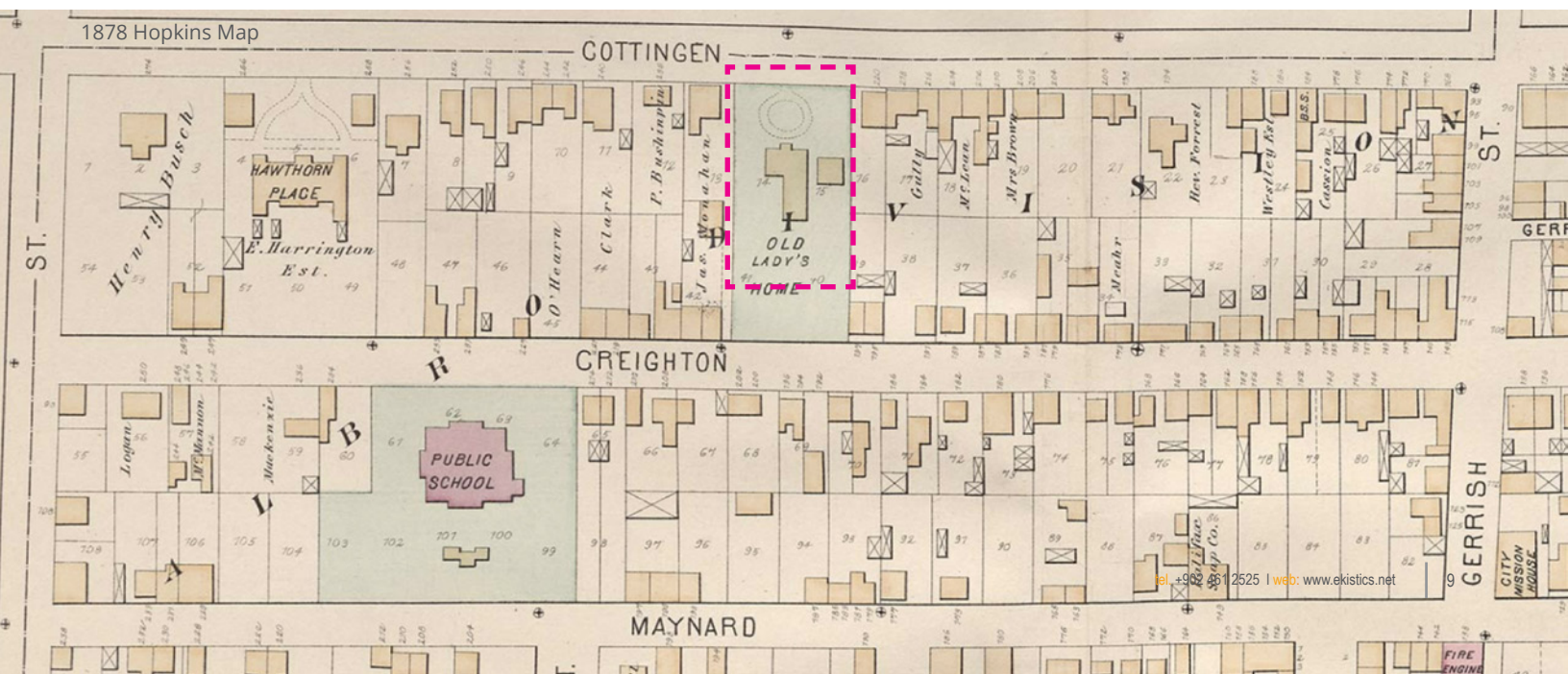


- » Undertake the work by someone qualified to do heritage undertakings
- » Do not create a false sense of historical development by adding elements from other historic places or by combining features of the same property that never coexisted.
- » Repair rather than replace character-defining elements where possible
- » Comply with accessibility requirements in such a way that character-defining elements are conserved and heritage value maintained.
- » Design the new addition in a manner that draws a clear distinction between what is historic and what is new. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic place. In either case, it should be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and colour, yet be distinguishable from the historic place.
- » Ensure the new addition does not obscure, damage or destroy the character-defining features of the historic place or undermine its heritage value.

### Architectural Design Intent of the Addition

The overall strategy for the new development on the property is guided by the Standards and Guidelines as noted above. The other considerations that guided the design of the building and site include:

- » The Gottingen Street facade of Victoria Hall has been retained fully and will be part of the rehabilitation program. We will have to address handicap access but we are hoping to accomplish that on the northern side of the building rather than on the facade.
- » The front yard landscape including the wall on Gottingen Street will be fully restored as part of this process. We anticipate traditional historic plazas and gardens designed by historic landscape architects.
- » The tower portion has not been physically attached to the Victoria Hall. The addition has been separated from the existing structure by no less than 20'.
- » The tower has been designed as a point tower to reinforce a smaller tower footprint (800 sq.m.) at a taller height rather than a wider midrise spanning the full length of Victoria Hall. This creates a building form that is clearly not part of the original structure and the vertical arrangement contrasts the horizontal nature of the 3-storey Victoria Hall. The colour scheme for the tower will be monochromatic vs the Chromatic colours of Victoria Hall. The use of glass on the Victoria Hall side will contrast the solid building materials and smaller openings found on the historic building. We believe the smaller point tower with higher height is a better strategy than a larger plate size at a lower height to accommodate the needed density to undertake this development.
- » The Creighton Street side of the development is a 3-storey street wall (the third storey is hidden in the mansard roof form) is consistent with the smaller residential scale of buildings on Creighton Street. Each unit will have its own door onto the street and the tower has been setback at least 3 m from the streetwall.
- » The tower portion has been located in the middle of the site to minimize visual impacts and shade impacts from Gottingen and Creighton Street.



### Proposed Rehabilitation program for Victoria Hall.

The developer has requested cost estimates from 5 heritage restoration contractors. Three have replied and one has been shortlisted to undertake the rehabilitation should the DA advance. The early rehabilitation proposal includes:

Replace existing windows with a triple pane thermopane	1,040,000
Re-trim existing windows with similar materials to original (wood)	0
Re-trim all other trim and crown work around the front (anything in white)	294,000
Re-facing of foundation with aesthetically appealing finish (stone / masonry face)	74,000
New front deck, steps and front door.	31,000
All new triple glass in front entry	12,000
All new side veranda and steps (to the right of front door)	35,000
Re-shingle / re-pair / re-stain entire front (wood shingles)	305,000
Re-shingle roofing shingles where needed (mansford)	108,000
Re-roofing the bitumen	150,000
Replace copper on top of roof	88,000
Reconstruct granite wall along sidewalk	154,000
Reconstruct 2 rear entries (doors, deck, trim)	10,000
All new ease troughing	10,000
Restructuring / underpinning	380,000
Scaffold	373,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,064,000</b>
<b>Total (excluding HST)</b>	<b>3,523,600</b>

The initial rehabilitation quotes were far from exhaustive and are based on a cursory visual inspection of the interior and exterior perimeter. We would expect to work with HRM and a heritage contractor to develop a more exhaustive list of repairs. For the purpose of this DA application, we have based the density request for the DA on a budget of \$3 m plus HST. Additional rehabilitation costs would obviously require more density to recoup the costs. This discussion would be part of the DA process.

We hope this summary provides you with the rationale needed to evaluate the merits of this heritage development agreement. We look forward to your review and comments and to advancing this project through the DA process.

Sincerely,

Chris Crawford, NSAA  
Vice-President, Ekistics Plan + Design