

To: Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** June 17, 2024
From: Mike Dickinson, Manager of Long Range Planning & Special Projects and
Hardev Gill, Planner 2.
Subject: **Heritage Conservation in Mission – Current Overview**

Recommendation

This report is provided for information. No staff recommendation accompanies this report and Council action is not required.

Purpose

This report informs Council on heritage conservation mechanisms currently being used in Mission and other proposed conservation initiatives. Additionally, the report also provides an overview of legislative tools that are available for BC municipalities for use in conserving buildings, structures and places.

Background

Mission's historical and cultural context is underscored by First Nations peoples who have occupied this area of BC for over the millennia. During the past 100+ years, Mission has grown from a small village located on the Fraser River to a small town and now a bustling city. Mission's steady growth can be attributed to a variety of influences including the construction of the CPR transcontinental rail line, development of hydro electric power, resource extraction, forestry activities, wood processing, fishing, farming, and continues to do so from outdoor recreation and many other cultural and business activities.

Like many communities, Mission is experiencing accelerated growth and consequently many of the city's historical buildings, structures and landscapes are under threat by new development. Mission residents, including members of First Nations, community organizations, the Mission Historical Society, Heritage Advisory Committee, and curators of the Mission Archives and Museum, have contributed to the collective knowledge about the community's built and cultural heritage.

The contribution of knowledge and interest in Mission's history from heritage professionals and residents alike yielded the Heritage Strategic Plan (2006), Heritage Context Study (2016), and other documents focusing on heritage protection. Supporting these initiatives, the City has bylaws and policies for the conservation of heritage buildings and structures. One such policy is LAN.57(C) 'Identification and Protection of Heritage Resources' (**Attachment 1**) which includes provisions for conserving heritage buildings via different mechanisms, including: a heritage inventory, a heritage register and heritage designation bylaws for select properties and buildings. The City's Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw also includes policies for cultural and heritage conservation that will be reviewed and revised during the ongoing OCP Update. This report also provides a summary of provincial legislation and the City's provisions for heritage conservation (**Attachment 2**).

In June of 2023, Council approved the 'Project Management Charter – Tools for Heritage

Conservation and Engagement (2023) (**Attachment 3**) that fulfilled Council's direction including amending Council Policy LAN.57 (C) 'Identification and Protection of Heritage Resources'. This policy provides administrative guidance for City staff to develop the required bylaws and procedures needed to implement the conservation tools listed in Attachment 3. This charter provides the foundation for staff to create these initiatives focusing on the following:

1. A process for community members to identify heritage sites and buildings;
2. Development of policy and procedures for using heritage conservation tools;
3. Development of a community engagement strategy; and,
4. Evaluating heritage conservation potential with the City's demolition permits process.

An inventory of buildings and sites with potential heritage value was developed and is currently used by City staff for evaluating heritage impact by development applications.

Following a review of the City's active committees, Council, resolved to dissolve the Mission Heritage Advisory Committee. Council mentioned its appreciation for the dedication and service of the Committee members and encouraged them to remain involved in heritage work through local heritage groups and community engagement opportunities. Staff will continue implementing the work of the former Committee through the preparation of heritage conservation tools and enabling community engagement regarding heritage issues through the OCP Update work program.

Discussion and Analysis

The following provides an overview of heritage conservation mechanisms currently used by the City of Mission which include: Heritage BC definitions of 'heritage', the 'Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada', BC legislation, Mission's current policies and practices. Part v of this report includes information about heritage conservation tools available for use in BC municipalities that could be employed by the City. Information in this section will be brought forward to Council for consideration in forthcoming reports.

i. Heritage BC

Heritage BC is a non-profit organization: 'dedicated to preserving and promoting British Columbia's rich heritage through a variety of initiatives. This organization hosts the Annual BC Heritage Awards, empowers BC communities to host events under a unified theme (for 2024 the theme was 'Layer by Layer.')

Heritage BC also provides webinars information and workshops to assist in heritage preservation. Heritage BC defines 'heritage' as follows:

- Heritage may be related to whatever a community, past or present, values and would like to pass on the future, regardless of age or vintage.
- It can be a place, landscape, a cultural practice or a language.
- It does not have to be associated with a famous historical figure or event, or in the case of buildings and structures, architecturally significant or be aesthetically pleasing.
- Generally, any structure older than 50 years may have heritage value.'

Additionally, the BC *Heritage Conservation Act* defines conservation as any activity undertaken to protect, preserve or enhance the heritage value of heritage property.

ii. Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

Many Canadian municipalities rely on the 'Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada,' prepared by Parks Canada, to guide the preservation of historic buildings and sites. This document outlines principles and practices designed to ensure the long-term conservation of Canada's historic places. Developed to provide practical guidance for effective conservation, it offers a unified set of standards and guidelines applicable across the country. Widely used by heritage professionals, it establishes fundamental principles for good conservation practice, starting with a comprehensive understanding of a historic place through documentary and oral research, as well as physical investigation. One of the key principles is that planning must precede any interventions, ensuring that conservation efforts are coordinated and integrated with broader planning and future-oriented activities. The standards aim to promote responsible conservation practices to protect irreplaceable historic sites. General standards are to:

- Conserve the heritage value of a historic place (by not removing, replacing or substantially altering character-defining elements).
- Conserve changes to a historic place which, over time, have become character-defining elements in their own right.
- Conserve heritage value by adopting an approach calling for minimal intervention.
- Recognize each historic place as a physical record of its time, place and use.

Guidelines for protecting archaeological sites and landscapes are also included in this document.

Hyperlink to the Guidelines: <https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/pages/standards-normes.aspx>

iii. BC Legislation pertaining to Heritage Conservation

The Provincial *Local Government Act* and *Heritage Conservation Act* provide mechanisms and tools for municipalities to use for heritage conservation.

The *Local Government Act, Part 15 – Heritage Conservation* includes provisions for heritage conservation tools. Extracts from Part 15 of the *Local Government Act* and the City's associated heritage conservation provisions (where applicable) are referenced in **Attachment 2**.

Hyperlink to the *Local Government Act*:

https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/r15001_00

Hyperlink to the *Heritage Conservation Act*:

https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96187_01

iv. City of Mission Heritage Plans and Policies

The City utilizes strategies, policies and bylaws that address heritage conservation, including:

- LAN.57(C) Identification and Protection of Heritage Resources (includes buildings and sites identified on the city's heritage register, and those designated, with heritage bylaw protection).

- This policy is focused on protecting heritage resources within Mission, and establishes a framework for Council, staff and the public to easily identify heritage resources within the city.
- This policy can be updated to incorporate new protection measures including heritage conservation tools available for BC municipalities to use under current legislation (*Local Government Act* and the *Heritage Conservation Act*).
- Heritage Strategic Plan (2006)
 - According to this plan, it is: ‘a plan of action that is based on a participatory process and which presents a community consensus about its heritage conservation priorities.’
 - The plan: ‘identifies short and long term objectives in a clear and achievable plan that will protect, promote and value heritage resources within the community.’
- Heritage Context Study (2016)
 - The purpose of the context Study is to identify the major themes and historical processes that have influenced the development of a community.
 - It informs local heritage conservation and management initiatives and may be used to develop heritage policies in the OCP, prepare or update a Heritage Strategic Plan, identify and evaluate properties for inclusion in a Community Heritage Register and other initiatives.
- Project Management Charter – Tools for Heritage Conservation and Engagement (2023)
 - The Charter assists in implementing the Council approved 2023 workplan identified in the Mission Heritage Advisory committee 2022 Annual Report. It also provides administrative guidance for City staff to develop the required bylaws and procedures to implement heritage conservation tools.
 - It provides a foundation for staff to create:
 - A process for community members to identify heritage sites and buildings;
 - development of policy and procedures for using heritage conservation tools;
 - development of a community engagement strategy; and
 - evaluating heritage conservation potential with the City’s demolition permits process.

Continued use of these mechanisms and adding new ones will be important for the City in protecting its heritage character that includes buildings and /or sites identified as having historic value, and in raising community awareness about the City’s history.

These documents, and others, provide a substantial foundation of information and guidance for evaluating and conserving the City’s heritage buildings, properties and landscapes. Recognizing that the City is growing quickly to accommodate new homes and businesses, it is timely to consider how these documents combined with provincial heritage legislation can assist the City in protecting its built heritage.

v. Advancing Heritage Conservation in Mission

Recognizing the challenges associated with the City’s growth, heritage conservation is at a crossroads where the value of historic buildings and structures could easily be reduced and

eliminated altogether. There is a collective understanding that more action is needed in protecting the heritage attributes of the City. This involves the continuation of work initiated by the Mission Heritage Advisory Committee along with other approaches that can engage the Mission community in learning more about heritage conservation and taking greater steps towards protecting heritage assets.

Within Mission's urban community, there are many properties that could be redeveloped to a higher density in accordance with recent changes to the Local Government Act (Bill 44) where small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) could be developed on land zoned for single-family dwellings or duplexes. Many of these properties are located in older areas of the city where buildings may have a construction age of 50 years or more. The SSMUH legislation includes circumstances where local governments are exempted from these requirements that include:

- land that is protected under s.12.1(2) of the *Heritage Conservation Act*;
- properties that under the LGA, s.611 that have a heritage designation protection; and
- Lands subject to a heritage revitalization agreement that came into force prior to the SSMUH legislation.

Next Steps in Heritage Conservation

Heritage conservation involves a combination of initiatives including use of legislative tools, sharing information on the city's website, working with the Archival Manager in researching properties, engaging with the Mission Historical Society and residents with interest and knowledge about heritage protection. The following lists the approaches that can be used.

- Introducing heritage conservation tools available from BC legislation including:
 - Heritage Revitalization Agreement
 - Heritage Alteration Permit
 - Designation of Heritage Conservation Areas
 - Temporary Heritage Protection Order
 - Heritage Property Maintenance Standards bylaw.
- Establishing a place on Mission's website for sharing information about the city's historic buildings, heritage conservation and insights from Heritage BC the Mission Historical Society and other organizations;
- Identifying heritage buildings, structures and places to include in the city's heritage inventory;
- Identifying buildings, structures and places that could be considered for heritage award recognition during BC Heritage Week;
- Retaining a heritage professional to conduct detailed reviews of buildings, structures and places identified in the heritage inventory;
- Through further review by a heritage professional, identify additional buildings for the city's heritage register and for protection by heritage designation and bylaw;
- Preparing a Demolition Permit procedure that will provide applicants with information about optional approaches for protecting buildings that are proposed for demolition;

- Engaging residents through the OCP Update to share their ideas about heritage conservation that could be used for new policies and implementation strategies as well as strengthening current ones;
- Engaging with the Mission Historical Society to enhance community awareness about Mission's historical treasures;
- Raising the profile of Mission's history during community events including MissionFest and other cultural events and activities;
- Reviewing City's policies, bylaws and administrative procedures to provide renewed guidance for protecting buildings, structures and properties in appreciation of the value that they contribute to the city; and
- Consider reviewing the City's 2006 Heritage Strategic Plan to ensure greater alignment with current Provincial heritage legislation, the city's OCP and other heritage protection mechanisms.

Heritage conservation involves both costs and benefits for the community.

These costs can include:

- Heritage professional fees and time for conducting research into properties identified in a heritage inventory to determine heritage value, potential for conservation, and for inclusion in the City's heritage registry;
- Development applicant's cost for retaining a Heritage Professional to evaluate building protection, and for protection of buildings or major elements of a building for inclusion in a development application; and
- City's costs for promoting heritage conservation through media information, museum displays, archival information, and other promotions.

These benefits can include:

- Retaining buildings, structures and landscapes with heritage value as they shed light on the historic character and uniqueness of the city;
- Promoting community education about the city's history;
- Enhancing the attractiveness of the city by highlighting the value of its history; and
- Contributing to community placemaking through heritage conservation to provide greater variety in the built form and function of buildings, potential for enhancing housing affordability and variety, re-using buildings vs. demolition (landfill concerns), and creating more visually appealing streetscapes and community places.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Communication

The members of the former Mission Heritage Advisory Committee were informed about and have expressed support for the preparation of this report, and ongoing reports to Council on ensuring conservation of buildings and structures with potential heritage value. This report contributes to the initiatives within the Project Management Charter – Tools for Heritage Conservation and Engagement.

Summary and Conclusion

This report informs Council about the provincial legislative framework, planning strategies, publications and mechanisms that address heritage conservation in the city. It is also intended to provide Council with information about next steps in heritage conservation that includes the use of various heritage conservation tools including a new policy and administrative approach for conserving buildings and structures with potential heritage value within the demolition permit process.

Report Prepared by: Mike Dickinson, Manager of Long Range Planning & Special Projects and

Hardev Gill, Planner 2, Development Planning

Reviewed by: Dan Sommer, Director of Development Services

Approved for Inclusion: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- A. LAN.57(C) Identification and Protection of Heritage Resources
- B. Extracts from the Local Government Act, Part 15, Heritage Conservation Act, and the City's associated heritage conservation provisions
- C. Extracts from Project Management Charter – Tools for Heritage Conservation and Engagement