

STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Dave Johnson Planner II – Heritage Planning and Development Planning djohnson@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type: Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>	
Meeting Date:	June 9, 2021		
Report No.:	HP-2021-016		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Heritage Permit Application – 174 Bagot St. – Second Floor
Street Facing Balcony/Terrace – New railing and floor boards

RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS Heritage and Planning staff has reviewed the proposed balcony/terrace railing replacement and floor boards for 174 Bagot Street and has concluded that the proposal to replace the existing non-conforming metal rail system with an aluminum railing system in white and existing floor boards with a PVC replacement in grey would be a compatible, incremental improvement to the existing heritage structure and would conform to the West Heritage Conservation District Plan;

FURTHER THAT Heritage Permit Application HP-2021-016, submitted by Erika and Scott Osmond – be approved to permit a railing and floor board replacement of a second floor balcony/terrace at 174 Bagot Street, subject to the finalization of details by Heritage and Planning staff.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

Places: The Town protects, preserves and promotes its natural assets, heritage, arts, culture and tourism.

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Cobourg Heritage Advisory Committee (CHC) operates in accordance with the Advisory Committee and Local Board Policy and Procedures for municipal boards and committees in the Town of Cobourg.

In general, the CHC is comprised of seven (7) members: one (1) member of Council and six (6) citizen members which reflect the diverse interests of the community.

The agenda for a CHC meeting is prepared and distributed to all committee members and is posted on the Municipal Website at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the scheduled meeting date, in an electronic format where possible.

Existing heritage legislation does not prescribe public notification or meetings for approval of alterations to designated properties, however the Cobourg Heritage Master Plan and implementing Heritage Conservation District Plans and associated regulations/guidelines underwent extensive public consultation and engagement prior to their approval. Review and approval of Heritage Permits by the Town are undertaken within the context of these documents.

The CHC also receives public delegations and communications/ correspondence from citizens in accordance with the Advisory Committee and Local Board Policy and Procedures for municipal boards and committees in the Town of Cobourg.

3. PURPOSE

To review and approve a recommendation regarding Heritage Permit Application HP-2021-016 for a replacement railing and floor boards for a street facing second floor terrace/balcony at 174 Bagot Street in the West Heritage Conservation District.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

An application for a Heritage Permit was received on May 27, 2021 from Scott and Erika Osmond to undertake a railing alteration on a second floor street facing terrace at 174 Bagot Street.

The subject property is located in the West Heritage Conservation District designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, and by By-law #27-90 as amended by By-law #118-91 and by By-law # 044-2016.

In accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act, the 90-day deadline for Council to consider the application is August 25, 2021.

Scope of Work

1. New white aluminum railing for a second floor street facing terrace/balcony by AlumaRail (see Appendix 1 – Product Brochure)
 - a. New pvc floor boards in grey by Timbretech



ADDRESS: 174 Bagot Street

INFORMATION: House, c.1905

SIGNIFICANCE; Individual

COMMENTS:

Figure 1: Heritage Property Information file prepared by Rob Mikel. Notice the terrace/balcony in existence in the 80's albeit with a different railing than exists today. There is no write-up on this particular dwelling. Very few houses of this style in Cobourg have original 2nd floor porch terraces, thus it is Heritage Planning staff's opinion that this 2nd floor terrace and doorway are not original but rather an alteration that evolved over many decades.



Figure 2: Current second floor terrace/balcony at 174 Bagot St. New railing system to closer match the front porch railing system.



Figure 3: Current second floor terrace/balcony at 174 Bagot St. New terrace railing system to closer match the main level front porch railing system. Note: Any new or replacement railings must meet Code requirements before a Building Permit could be issued.

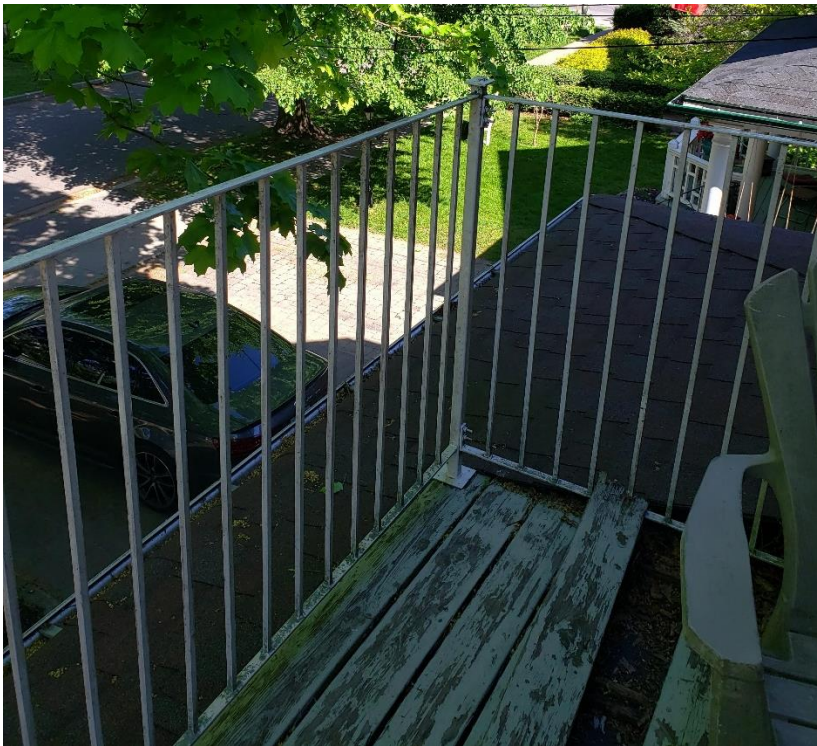


Figure 4: Existing railing of the second floor terrace/balcony. Notice the rotting floor boards as well.



Figure 5: Existing railing of the second floor terrace/balcony.



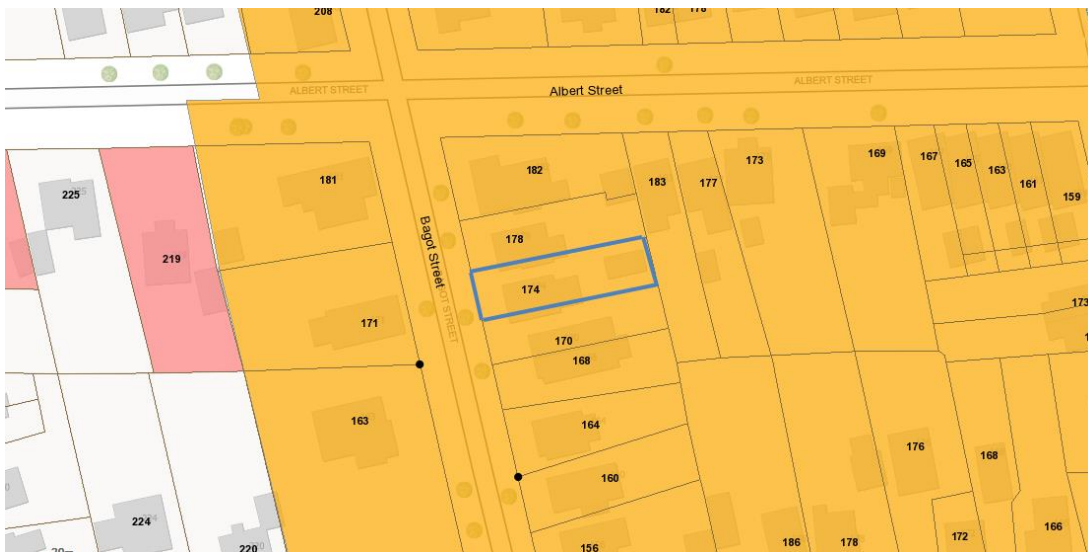
Figure 6: Proposed PVC floor boards for terrace/balcony colour to be grey from Timbretech



Figure 7: Proposed railing system from AlumaRail – colour to be white (Please see Appendix 1 for the product brochure) – Rail system is on page 3 and is highlighted. This railing must be designed to comply with Building Code requirements for height, spindle separations and safety/stability.

5. BACKGROUND

The subject property is located at 174 Bagot Street and designated under the West Heritage Conservation District.



Above: Subject property outlined in blue within the context of the West Heritage Conservation District. The properties shaded in pink are listed on the Municipal Heritage Register but is not formally designated.

Historical and Architectural Context

Staff would normally give an overview of the architectural context of the subject property, however, one is not available for this property. Though, as you can see from above, the estimated date of construction is c. 1905, it appears the dwelling could be an Ontario Vernacular structure which is commonly seen in Cobourg.

6. ANALYSIS

The Town of Cobourg's Heritage Master Plan was adopted by Council in 2016 to direct conservation and management of the Town's heritage resources. As part of this project, the existing Heritage Conservation District guidelines for all of the Town's Heritage Conservation Districts designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act were reviewed, and Heritage Conservation District Plans were prepared. The West Heritage Conservation District Plan was adopted by By-law 044-2016 on May 24th, 2016.

The Plan contains policies and guidelines for conservation and the management of growth and change in the West Heritage Conservation District. *Policies* are requirements that must be followed when undertaking alterations to buildings or changes to properties. *Guidelines* are best-practice suggestions to be considered when undertaking alterations to buildings or changes to properties.

The following section of this report provides excerpts from the West Heritage Conservation District Plan that are relevant to the evaluation of the proposed scope of work.

4.4 Entrances

Policies

- a) Protect and maintain entrances on principal elevations.

- b) Character-defining porches or verandahs shall only be removed where they pose a life / safety threat. In such cases, they shall be thoroughly recorded prior to removal to allow for their accurate reconstruction.
- c) The design and construction of a new entrance / porch is required to be compatible with the character of the building. Restoration of a missing porch must be based upon historical, pictorial and physical documentation.

Guidelines

- a) Entrance ramps may be permitted for barrier-free access in accordance with applicable legislation, but should not be physically attached to avoid damage to the heritage building fabric. In exceptional circumstances, attachments may be permitted where they cause the least amount of damage to heritage building fabric.
- b) Important features such as doors, glazing, lighting, steps and door surrounds should be conserved wherever possible.
- c) Where new entrances or exterior staircases are required, they should be installed on secondary elevations.
- d) Wood is encouraged to be used in the construction of new entrances and porches. Other materials, such as synthetic wood products are discouraged on façades facing the street, and will be considered on a case by case basis through the heritage permit process.

Discussion

Prior to Council's adoption of the West Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan in 2016, Heritage Permit applications were primarily evaluated against the Town of Cobourg's Heritage Conservation District Guidelines and Parks Canada's Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. The West Heritage Conservation District Plan provides the same level of heritage conservation using best practices as expressed in the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, while continuing with a similar management of future change and potential new development within the West Heritage Conservation District Plan as the previous Heritage Conservation District guidelines. The Commercial Core Conservation District Plan is also consistent with the 2005 changes to the Ontario Heritage Act, the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement and the Ontario Heritage Toolkit.

Second Floor Balcony/Terrace

The property owners propose to replace the existing non-conforming metal railing system on an existing second floor porch roof balcony/terrace with a new white Aluminum system from AlumaRail (see Appendix 1 – Brochure). The new railing system will better match the ground floor porch in style and colour, albeit in aluminum versus wood. The ground floor railings and spindles look to have been altered sometime in the past, as seen in Figure 1. As we can see from the above picture of the Heritage Property Report, this porch balcony/terrace structure has been in existence in some form since at least the 1980's, if not before, however it is our belief that it is not an original character-defining heritage attribute. We can see that the south side front second floor window at was made into a door at some point in the past, more than likely at the same time the porch roof balcony/terrace.

Given that this porch roof balcony/terrace and railing has been in existence for so long and is quite deteriorated, the present owners are proposing to improve the railing system to better suit the existing building context, and bring it up to current Building Code to ensure life safety. It is the opinion of Heritage and Planning staff that this proposal represents an *incremental improvement* to the heritage structure which will enhance the façade and replace an unsympathetic alteration that was made many years ago. Had this terrace and railing been defined as an original character-defining attribute, or if it was a completely new terrace alteration and not a long-standing feature, Heritage staff would have encouraged a wood railing system in accordance with the Guideline d) above as part of good heritage practices. Finally, the rotting deck boards will be replaced by a PVC floorboard system from Timbretech that is proposed to be grey colour and will not be visible from the street, which is appropriate in this instance.

The proposed alteration has been evaluated against the West HCD Plan, specifically the policy relating to Entrances (4.4), and it has been determined that the railing system represents an incremental upgrade over the current non-conforming metal railing and is an acceptable alteration to what is believed to be a non-original feature. Furthermore, the new rail system better matches the first floor porch railing in style and colour and is compatible with the other heritage features/attributes of the structure. Although wood is to be encouraged and other materials discouraged per the Guidelines, staff believe the decorative aluminum railing is a reasonable alternative material choice in this instance given the length of time the unsympathetic alteration has existed, its heritage-inspired design, and its intent to address an unsafe condition. No other defined heritage attributes are proposed to be changed as a result of this application. The applicants have retained Andrew Smith Home Improvements (not to be confused with Andrew Smith Building Design), as the contractor to undertake the proposed alteration.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

There are no anticipated financial implications on the Municipality as a result of the approval of this Heritage Permit application.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed alteration through the replacement of the existing non-conforming metal railing system and floor boards on the second floor, street facing balcony/terrace to a new aluminum rail system in white and grey PVC floor boards, meets the policies as set out in the West Heritage Conservation District Plan (Section 4.4) and the goals of the Cobourg Heritage Master Plan, subject to the finalization of details by Heritage and Planning staff.