



The City of Saint John



APPLICATION FOR A
HERITAGE PERMIT
21-0184

LORETTA MATTHEWS
51 ORANGE STREET
PID 00007815

Date	2021-04-01
To:	Heritage Development Board
From:	Growth and Community Services
Prepared by:	Benjamin Peterson
Approved by:	Jennifer Kirchner

SUBJECT

Application for a Heritage Permit to demolish and reconstruct a non-character-defining front entry stairs and landings and to replace three wooden exterior doors with insert steel doors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This application concerns the reconstruction of a front entry system, including the replacement of three doors. The proponent intends to recreate poured concrete steps and landings and to restore existing iron railings. The proponent intends to remove front landscaped areas in favour of raised-bed planters. Proposed replacement doors are being presented after feedback from two specialists deemed the existing doors beyond repair. The *Standards and Guidelines* support the replacement of the doors.

DECISION HISTORY

At its February 3, 2021 meeting, the Board **denied** an application to replace three wooden entry doors with steel insert doors.

DISCUSSION

A portion of this application, concerning the replacement of three entry doors on a projecting front vestibule, has been the subject of a previous staff report. A summary of this analysis and a discussion of new evidence will follow.

The proponent has amended their proposal and incorporated the demolition and reconstruction of the building's front entry system. This series of steps and landings in both wood and poured-in-place concrete provides access to each of the projecting vestibule's three doors. The steps have reached the end of their service life and the proponent wishes to maintain the form and material of the existing system. This scope of work does not pertain to any intervention on the projecting vestibule. Existing iron



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rails will be removed, rehabilitated, and replaced with new iron rails to be added on the centre steps. Existing wooden knee walls would be removed and not reinstated.

The proponent also intends to remove two patches of bare ground, once used for landscaping and to fill these spaces with concrete. The proponent intends to reinstate landscaping in this space with a pair of round, raised wooden planters 36" high and 24" in diameter. Iron fenders around the landscaped area would be repaired and replaced.

The proponent and their contractor have identified damage to many of the wooden and concrete elements that can not be easily repaired and would be best suited for replacement. Particularly, years of wear and weathering on the concrete pads and steps have resulted in chips and breaks that cannot be repaired in-situ and wood rot has begun to affect the steps.

The consideration of three replacement doors and adjoining transom windows in non-traditional materials was determined to conform to the intent of the *Standards and Guidelines*. Prior analysis of the replacement of three front entry doors identified them as an integral part of the building's front vestibule. It noted that each door and their elements—particularly the long-glazed panel, and the subordinate moulded panels were seen as contributing elements of the overall character of the residence. Generally, though the document discourages replacement in contemporary materials, where the present doors have very clearly reached the end of their useful lives and as they pose a marked threat to the integrity of the vestibule, staff supported the applicant's proposal. Two professional cabinetmakers, representing Fudge's Cabinets and Woodwork and Black River Woodworking, have each concluded that the current doors are beyond reasonable maintenance or restoration and that replacement is the required intervention.

To bear in mind, Standard 8 requires: "maintain character-defining elements on an ongoing basis, [repair] character-defining elements by reinforcing their materials using recognized conservation methods, [and replace] in kind any extensively deteriorated or missing parts of character-defining elements, where there are surviving prototypes." Though replacement in non-traditional materials initially appears in contravention with this standard, the integral programmatic function of the vestibule underlines the inadequacy of the traditional material in ensuring the security of the building and the integrity of the building's envelope. Extensive weathering on the doors and the applicant's prior repairs interfaces with Guideline 16. This directive, specific to Windows and Doors states: "[Replace] in kind irreparable windows, doors or storefronts based on physical and documentary evidence. If using the same materials and design details is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials or details may be considered."

The proposed replacement doors are, in staff's opinion, a reasonable facsimile of the stock, non-original doors that require replacement. A single long glazed panel of 48 inches closely matches the existing glazed panel of 44 inches. Below, a flush steel panel with stamped moulding emulates the pair of

recessed panels on the existing doors. Finally, though texturally distinct from the current wooden doors, the sheer surface of the steel more closely matches the sheer, smooth finish of new wood and not the pitted and weathered texture of the existing wood or of a fiberglass facsimile.

As discussed in the previous staff report, Standard 9 provides the rationale underpinning staff's recommendation: "Make any intervention needed to preserve character-defining elements physically and visually compatible with the historic place and identifiable on close inspection." The proposed change to the doors meets each of these two criteria: similar detailing and proportions emulate the former doors, while the solidity and the sheer smoothness of the contemporary material allow the intervention to be identified on close inspection.

Without the reasonable replacement of components at the end of their working lives, the physical integrity of the character-defining front vestibule is threatened. The use of contemporary materials provides for enhanced security, energy efficiency, and reinforces to the integrity of the building envelope. Over many years, the applicant has been diligent in maintaining the doors. After repeated attempts at conservation, the current doors have reached the end of their useful lives and require replacement.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the application for a Heritage Permit and permit the reconstruction of the front entry system and the replacement of three exterior doors and transoms with the proposed steel doors as presented.



General view of entry system and landscaped areas.



View of water-infiltrated spalling concrete. West landing.



View of prior repair work. West landing.



View of deteriorated concrete pad. East landing.



View of deteriorated filler around glazed panel on South-facing door.



View of previous reinforcement on South-facing door.



General view of East-facing door.



View of deteriorated plywood panels on West-facing door.