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Town of Aurora
Committee of the Whole Report
No. PDS26-044

Subject: Heritage Permit Application HPA-2026-02 – Victoria Hall (27 Mosley Street)

Prepared by: Adam Robb, Manager, Policy Planning and Heritage

Department: Planning and Development Services

Date: May 12, 2026

Recommendation

1. That Report No. PDS26-044 be received; and
2. That Heritage Permit Application HPA-2026-02 be approved, to permit the restoration and alteration of Victoria Hall (27 Mosley Street).

Executive Summary

This report seeks Council's approval of Heritage Permit Application HPA-2026-02 regarding the restoration and alteration of Victoria Hall.

- Victoria Hall is an individually designated heritage property located within the downtown Aurora Promenade
- Council has approved a capital project to refurbish the building, and heritage permit approval is required prior to construction commencing

Background

Victoria Hall is an individually designated heritage property located within the downtown Aurora Promenade

Victoria Hall is a Gothic Revival building individually designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* through By-law 5081-08.R. The building is notable for its significant historical, design, and contextual value as a community asset within the downtown

Promenade area. Notable heritage features include the front gable roof, gothic windows, side buttresses and brick exterior.

The building was originally constructed in 1883 to house the local Disciples of Christ congregation. By 1922, the property was sold to the Trustees of the Aurora Public School, where it became a health hall. In 1945, the building transitioned to a library, which remained open until approximately 1963, while the property was transferred to the Town in 1951. Since then, the building has been used for a variety of purposes and programming but has remained vacant since the construction of Town Square.

Analysis

Council has approved a capital project to refurbish the building, and heritage permit approval is required prior to construction commencing

Due to the location of Victoria Hall as part of the downtown Aurora Promenade, adaptive re-use of the property is encouraged. In 2025, Council authorized Community Services (Facilities) staff to issue a Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) for Leased Space Operators at Victoria Hall. Further, through Community Services (Facilities) capital project AM0259, Council approved refurbishing and completing repairs to Victoria Hall. Community Services has retained CS&P Architects as the design consultant for the project.

The capital project and proposed work to Victoria Hall includes:

- Removal of the non-heritage rear addition at southern end (built circa the 1970s)
- Addition of a new rear entrance (southern end)
- Addition of an accessible ramp and stairs (southern end)
- Interior layout alterations including relocation of washroom facilities and construction of an accessible, barrier-free washroom
- Opening of a Cathedral ceiling (removal of non-heritage drop ceiling)
- Restoration of certain heritage elements including exterior bricks, and replacement/enhancement of features such as the doorway and guardrails
- Improvements to other non-heritage infrastructure/technical components, such as electrical systems, mechanical, flooring/building structure etc.

The intent of the capital project is to refurbish Victoria Hall and enable the adaptive re-use of the site. Conceptual elevations, site plan drawings and renderings are further attached to this report (with drawings having been updated slightly based on comments received from the Heritage Advisory Committee, which are detailed further below in this

report). Additionally, a Heritage Impact Assessment has also been prepared by a qualified heritage consultant in support of the proposed alterations, which deems the work to be minor and acceptable from a heritage perspective.

Advisory Committee Review

The Heritage Advisory Committee reviewed the subject heritage permit application at the meeting held on April 13, 2026. The following comments were provided by the Committee, and responses by the consultants:

HAC Comment	Consultant Response
<p>Questions regarding the compatibility of the modern rear addition relevant to the historic character of Victoria Hall. Preference given to using bricks or trying to match the style of Victoria Hall through the addition and not use glass.</p>	<p>The consultant noted the province’s guiding principle in heritage conservation being “Legibility” and that new work should be clearly distinguished from old. Additions should be recognized as products of their own time and not blur the distinction between old and new. Trying to replicate Victoria Hall and its bricks in the new addition would run the risk of not maintaining clear legibility between the new addition and original historic building. The existing historic building is being fully maintained in situ and the addition is considered a product of its own time.</p> <p>Using bricks and trying to match the style of Victoria Hall was largely what was attempted in the 1970s with the existing rear addition.</p>

HAC Comment	Consultant Response
<p>Concern over the building’s new orientation with the rear now largely serving as the primary entrance. Preference to have the rear addition either be smaller/scaled down or more exclusive for accommodating an accessibility entrance only, with the historic front entrance to continue to be used as a primary entryway for the main volume of entries.</p>	<p>The consultant indicated that in order to make the building accessible, a ramp would need to be installed and that the most appropriate location is the rear, to minimize impacts on trees and the main front heritage façade. This also provided an opportunity for enhanced inter-connection with the existing Town Square. The historic front entrance is still functionable and will also be restored and not exclusively serve as just an exit. It will also still be able to function as an entrance point.</p>
<p>Concern over the size/scale of the rear landscaped area and loss of parking spaces.</p>	<p>The consultant indicated that this space was designed in a manner to activate the public realm and to provide enhanced connection to the Town Square. A reduction of parking spaces to the Town Square property is technically outside the scope of heritage permit review as no heritage features of Victoria Hall are impacted through that specific work.</p> <p>Based on comments received, the rear landscaped area has been revised slightly in the attached latest drawings to try and minimize the extent of the stairs and add more open/patio space to the entryway area.</p>
<p>Confirmation of protection for interior wainscoting as the interior alterations take place, and comment that the washroom location impacts the existing Mosley Street doorway.</p>	<p>The consultant confirmed the intent to protect and enhance the wainscoting through any new interior layouts.</p> <p>The interior layout has also been revised in the latest drawings to account for this comment and now proposes having the washroom facility flank the side of the doorway so as to provide clearer access and line of sight to the historic doorway.</p>

HAC Comment	Consultant Response
Question/concern regarding the location of the gas metre and its visibility from Victoria Street.	The latest drawings attached have corrected the gas metre location to no longer show it as visible from Victoria Street.
Concern that the new addition may become outdated itself in 50+ years	The consultant indicated the design intentionally accounts for this and the best practice of “reversibility”. By clearly distinguishing the new addition from the main historic Victoria Hall, future long-term work on the property can clearly understand the old vs. new and replace any new components as desired in the future while still respecting the core components of historic Victoria Hall. The architecture is intended to be a product of its own modern time and not try to falsely replicate the historic style of the past, which runs the risk of blurring the distinction of old and new time periods.
Questions regarding cost savings if the rear addition was to be simplified/made smaller.	The consultant indicated that a primary focus on the design was to make the building accessible. Cost-savings in this domain could result in negative impacts overall to the building’s accessibility. Opportunities to save costs will continue to be explored by the consultant team and facilities staff through the duration of the project.
Concern over the protection of heritage features.	Per the heritage designation by-law, the defined heritage attributes of the property include the gable roofline, gothic windows and sills, side buttresses, front entryway, brick, datestone and wainscoting. These items are largely unimpacted by the proposed alterations and the rear addition. The designated heritage features are intended to be restored/enhanced as part of the capital

HAC Comment	Consultant Response
	project. The rear addition was also intentionally designed with a glass curtain wall to promote transparency and be able to expose/highlight some of the key heritage features of Victoria Hall for appreciation (such as improving sightlines for bricks and into the interior).

Other comments from members of the public have also been received, with some echoing those made by the Heritage Advisory Committee as outlined above, and others being in favour of the proposed design, citing the ability to revitalize the site while effectively distinguishing between the historic Victoria Hall and providing opportunity for inter-connection to Town Square.

The consultant’s Heritage Impact Assessment ultimately concludes that the proposal represents a minimal and acceptable impact on Victoria Hall from a heritage perspective. The consulting team also noted that throughout the construction process, attention would be given to any heritage features of the building that become uncovered, such as beams that may get exposed as the ceiling is opened, or the transom above the front door, etc. with priority given to the care and restoration of these features.

Legal Considerations

Under Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, any developments or alterations that would potentially impact the heritage character of an individually designated heritage property requires Council’s consent. This legislative requirement is implemented in the Town of Aurora through the process of a Heritage Permit Application, which is subject to Council’s approval after consultation with the Heritage Advisory Committee. Council must make a decision on a heritage permit application within 90 days after a notice of receipt is served on the applicant, otherwise Council shall be deemed to have consented to the application. This deadline can also be extended indefinitely on consent of the applicant and Town. In this scenario, the Town is both the owner and applicant and staff will follow Council direction with respect to the application.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this heritage permit review process. However, this heritage permit is in support of the Town's approved capital project AM0259 – Victoria Hall Refurbishment.

Communications Considerations

None directly pertaining to this Heritage Permit process. Future communications regarding project timing and milestones will be provided throughout construction.

Climate Change Considerations

The restoration and adaptive re-use of Victoria Hall encourages the long-term sustainability and resiliency of the heritage asset.

Link to Strategic Plan

Supporting an Exceptional Quality of Life for All by satisfying the requirements under Celebrating and Promoting our Culture.

Alternative to the Recommendation

1. That Heritage Permit Application HPA-2026-02 be refused.

Conclusions

Heritage Permit Application HPA-2026-02 proposes alterations and the restoration of Victoria Hall. Since the property is individually designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, Council approval of the heritage permit application is required prior to construction commencing.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Location Map

Attachment 2 – Conceptual Site Plan, Elevations and Renderings

Attachment 3 – Heritage Impact Assessment Report

Previous Reports

Heritage Advisory Committee Memorandum dated April 13, 2026.

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on April 23, 2026

Approvals

Approved by Marco Ramunno, Director, Planning and Development Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer