



The Corporation of the City of Stratford Planning and Heritage Sub-committee

MINUTES

Date: December 11, 2025

Time: 4:49 P.M.

Location: Council Chamber City Hall

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Sebben - Chair Presiding, Councillor Burbach - Vice Chair, Councillor Biehn, Councillor McCabe, Councillor Wordofa

Staff Present: Tatiana Dafoe – City Clerk, Marc Bancroft – Manager of Planning, Alex Burnett - Planner, Connor Occleston – Acting Chief Building Official, Audrey Pascual - Deputy Clerk, Miranda Franken - Council Clerk Secretary

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respectful Conduct Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

No disclosures of pecuniary interest were made by a Member at the December 11, 2025, Planning and Heritage meeting.

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Intermediate Planner

4.1 Heritage Alteration Permit Appeal for 23 Downie Street (PLA25-002)

Staff Recommendation: THAT the decision by the Heritage Stratford Permit Review Committee to deny the Heritage Alteration Permit application for 23 Downie Street to permit covering the existing rear brick facade with EIFS stucco, be upheld as it is contrary to the recommendation of the said Committee and the Stratford's Heritage Conservation District Standards.

Sub-committee Discussion: The Intermediate Planner provided an overview of the report. Highlights included the following:

- the application being for a Heritage Alteration Permit to cover the rear facade with stucco as the option to repair with brick being beyond repair;
- the application having been denied by the Heritage Stratford Permit Review Committee (HSPRC) and the applicant having appealed that decision;
- the Heritage Conservation District (HDC) guidelines outlining in section 3.1.1 - Provisions for Masonry Walls - indicating the original masonry is to be retained where possible with replacements matching as close as possible;
- patching of stucco only being considered where masonry is beyond repair;
- the decision of the HSPRC being that the wall should be repaired with brick; and

- should the decision be upheld the applicant having an opportunity to appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Members of Sub-committee and staff discussed the report:

- it being questioned how it is determined if a wall is beyond repair when one professional indicates it is but another indicates it is not;
- the Heritage Stratford Advisory Committee being comprised of members with certain expertise and knowledge with a member being the principal owner of a local masonry company and a qualified professional in this regard;
- HSPRC not having provided justification for their review and being of the opinion that the brick is not beyond repair;
- it not being known who conducted the masonry review for the committee;
- concern that it is difficult to decide on this appeal without sufficient information from the applicant;
- there being interest in discussing a mechanism for a facade renewal program if it must be maintained as laid out;
- a Member noting the building's brick having been painted and asking if it is to be returned to its original form requiring sandblasting of the paint;
- staff having noted the HSPRC are looking for renovation to the current appearance with a permit likely having been issued in the past to paint; and
- a Member commented a stucco exterior may not look different than painted brick.

The Clerk noted that the addendum did not circulate and the property owners had requested to speak to the report.

Motion by Councillor Burbach

THAT Joanna Gordon and Craig Foster be heard.

Carried

Craig Foster, owner of 23 Downie Street, spoke to Sub-committee regarding the appeal. Highlights of the discussion included the following:

- outlining the history of the establishment of the Heritage Committee in restoring downtown properties;
- 23 Downie Street having been bought in 1996 and the building being maintained and enhanced to create apartments;
- the objection to the HSPRC decision being based on the state of the bricks;
- a mason having indicated the bricks are not worth saving and contain several layers of latex which has promoted further deterioration;
- the latex being required to be removed if the work is to be done;
- it being believed that the criteria indicates at least 50% of the bricks are to be replaced before a decision will be granted to cover instead of repair;
- the wall currently being at 40% and with the removal of the latex coating the percentage of bricks to be replaced to double;
- the front of the building conforming with the street scape with the request being only for the back of the building;
- the building backing onto a parking lot with several other rear facades having been done in stucco;
- the appellants feeling a stucco rear wall would conform with the other buildings;
- stucco having been used as an exterior finish for hundreds years;
- the application of stucco to provide insulation equating to energy savings and four to five weeks less of impeding parking and traffic flow during repair;

- the process having been started in May 2025, a stucco deposit having been paid with work to begin the last week of May 2025 and completed before the 2025 festival season; and
- it being December now and the appellants asking for reconsideration.

Discussion occurred between Sub-committee and the appellant:

- it being questioned whether the information provided by the owner was given to the HSPRC;
- the application having been provided from the HSPRC with most of this information not included and staff not being privy to conversations had between the appellants and the committee;
- the appellant noting the Chair of the Heritage Stratford Advisory Committee having been the mason used in their initial assessment;
- more insulation not being able to be added if the brick is repaired;
- a Member expressed confusion on the rules relating to front and rear facades with some instances where no heritage application is done for the back of the buildings;
- questions being asked about the 50%;
- Mr. Foster clarifying that the mason had assessed the brick decay at 30-40 percent deterioration with the appellant believing this to double when the paint comes off; and
- it being questioned whether a professional opinion on the reparability of the brick could be provided.

Members of Sub-committee and staff continued discussion on this matter:

- the HSPRC and staff interpretation being the original masonry must be maintained and not covered with stucco;
- it being questioned whether there is an existing precedent applying to the back of buildings;

- support being expressed for referring this matter back to obtain additional information on how the decision was made and on past decisions;
- the Clerk having advised that direction could be given to staff to go back to the permit review committee for a subsequent report;
- it being requested that information be provided on the façade improvement program;

Motion by Councillor Burbach

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the report titled, "Heritage Alteration Permit Appeal for 23 Downie Street (PLA25-002)", be referred to the January 12, 2026, Regular Council meeting and to staff to prepare a report which includes information on:

- **the process for considering heritage alteration permit applications,**
- **the rules relating to alterations of the front or back portion of buildings in the heritage area including amount of surface area (30% or 50%),**
- **precedent set as a result of previous decisions that are similar to this application,**
- **the status of the Facade Improvement Loan program,**
- **options for obtaining a professional opinion on the state of the brick.**

Carried

5. Department Update

Sub-committee Discussion: The Manager of Planning provided a department update highlighting the following:

- the Planning Department being at full complement with the recent hire of the Supervisor of Planning, Policy and Placemaking;
- the key mandate of the Supervisor of Planning, Policy and Placemaking being to complete the Official Plan review;

- there being a number of applications in process including a residential development application;
- a number of draft plan submissions having come through the public meeting process;
- some applications having stalled and this being indicative of the current market with those developers not being eager to advance the projects; and
- the Zoning By-law housekeeping amendment reviewed at the October 2025 Public meeting to come to the January 26 Council meeting for consideration.

6. Advisory Committee Minutes

The following Advisory Committee Minutes were provided for the information of Sub-committee:

- Heritage Stratford Advisory Committee minutes of May 13, 2025 and October 15, 2025

7. Next Sub-committee Meeting

Information about the 2026 Sub-committee meetings will be available at a later date.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Councillor Biehn

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Planning and Heritage Sub-committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

Meeting Start Time: 4:49 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 5:27 P.M.