

CITY OF BURNABY

COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: HERITAGE BUILDING CONSERVATION STUDY
W.J. Mathers House "Altnadene" 6450 Deer Lake Avenue
(Shadbolt Centre for the Arts)**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the proposed phased program of exterior conservation works for the Mathers House be approved, as outlined in this report.
2. **THAT** an expenditure not to exceed \$75,000, consistent with the 2005-2009 Capital Program, be approved for the first phase of works associated with the conservation of the foundation and basement for the Mathers House, as outlined in this report.
3. **THAT** the Community Heritage Commission request Council to forward this report to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission for information purposes.

REPORT

The Community Heritage Commission, at its meeting held on 2005 April 07, received and adopted the attached report outlining the results of a heritage conservation study completed for the Mathers House building and to propose a phased program of capital improvements for this designated heritage building.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Redman
Chair

Councillor S. Dhaliwal
Vice Chair

COPY: CITY MANAGER
DIR. PLNG. & BLDG.
DIR. FINANCE
DIR. PARKS

TO: COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

2005 March 31

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

OUR FILE: 77000 20

W.J. Mathers House

SUBJECT: HERITAGE BUILDING CONSERVATION STUDY
W.J. Mathers House "Altnadene" 6450 Deer Lake Avenue
(Shadbolt Centre for the Arts)

PURPOSE: To outline the results of a heritage conservation study completed for the Mathers House building and to propose a phased program of capital improvements for this designated heritage building.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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2. **THAT** an expenditure not to exceed \$75,000, consistent with the 2005 - 2009 Capital Program, be approved for the first phase of works associated with the conservation of the foundation and basement of the Mathers House, as outlined in this report.
3. **THAT** the Community Heritage Commission request Council to forward this report to the Parks, Recreation & Culture Commission for information purposes.

R E P O R T

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Mathers House was acquired by the City of Burnaby in 1971 for incorporation into the Burnaby Arts Centre complex. In 1992, this significant 1912 mansion was designated as a City heritage site to protect its unique character as part of the Deer Lake Park heritage precinct. Although the building was initially renovated and upgraded for public and staff office uses in 1971, this important public facility requires improvements to the building to ensure the long-term conservation of its heritage features.

On 2004 April 19, Council approved a recommendation from the Community Heritage Commission to undertake a consultant study of the building's foundation and basement, exterior restoration and gate relocation. This report outlines the outcome of this study and proposes a phased program of building improvements to provide for the long-term conservation of this heritage building.

**2.0 HISTORY OF CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATIONS
(WILLIAM J. & MARY MATHERS HOUSE "ALTNADENE")**

William J. & Mary Mathers began construction of their "magnificent new home" at Deer Lake, built for a reported cost of \$13,000 in 1912. "Altnadene" was designed by English born, trained architect and Burnaby resident, F.W. Macey, who had also designed F.J. Hart's Deer Lake home "Avalon". Both homes are examples of the unusual Romanesque Revival Style, rarely executed locally in large residential

homes. "Altnadene" is an excellent and rare example of a unique form of this style incorporating in its original design scheme a pyramid roof, a tower with battlements and a series of arched windows. Typical of grand Edwardian country homes, the interior boasted nine bedrooms, nine fireplaces and six principal main floor rooms designed for entertaining guests (see attachment #1).

During World War I, the large size of "Altnadene" allowed it to be used, in part, as a convalescent hospital for wounded soldiers. The Mathers family left the house after the death of William J. Mathers in 1929. After being rented for several years, it was finally sold in 1939 to the Vancouver Catholic Archdiocese for use as a Junior Seminary known as the Seminary of Christ the King, to be operated by the Benedictines of Westminster Priory located on the adjacent property (Ceperley House). The mansion was converted to house "the seminary chapel, administration offices, classrooms, study halls and infirmary". A large three storey addition was added to the rear of the building in a sympathetic architectural style to house a dormitory for students.

In 1954, the building was acquired by the Universal Life Foundation that continued to use the building for both educational and residential purposes. During their occupancy, the home's unique tower entrance was altered to serve as a base for a silo-like church steeple addition, built to house a spiral staircase and an illuminated exterior cross sign. This addition destroyed the home's handsome original front entrance and tower (see attachment #2).

In 1971, the building was acquired by the City of Burnaby for use as a part of the Burnaby Arts Centre, which had been established on the adjoining property in 1966. In 1992, during Burnaby's Centennial, the W.J. Mathers House "Altnadene" was designated by Council as a City heritage site in recognition of its history, architecture and landmark status as part of the Deer Lake Park heritage precinct.

3.0 HERITAGE CONSERVATION STUDY

The Mathers House has never before been the subject of an architectural study to determine a plan for the building's conservation. The Deer Lake Park Master Plan identified that the Mathers House and its landscape required further study to improve this gateway feature. The Heritage Conservation Study completed in 2004 by McGinn Engineering and Preservation Ltd. studied three priority heritage components of the house, as approved by the Community Heritage Commission and Council. These included the foundation and basement, exterior restoration, and gate relocation. The study considered the current condition of each of these heritage components and outlined proposed conservation works a provided a preliminary estimate of costs, as outlined below.

3.1 Foundation and Basement

Current Condition:

The Mathers House is a four-storey structure with approximately 11,000 square feet of floor space. The building serves an important function as part of the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts and its visual art program. Currently, the basement primarily accommodates the building's mechanical services. Other space in the house has evolved to be used as a clay damp room as part of the pottery program of the arts centre.

The Mathers House basement and foundation walls require attention to improve their overall condition. The foundation of the Mathers House is primarily composed of rubble masonry walls. There is evidence of water infiltration and seepage around the basement perimeter and in some areas the foundation walls have been undermined and are showing signs of deterioration. The perimeter drainage of the structure is not functioning and results in the basement being subject to flooding.

The basement floor is rough unfinished concrete in one section, while another space is unlevelled dirt and stone. The addition of modern beam lines to support the floor joists have not been securely connected to the structural posts and concrete foundation pads. Many areas of the basement are poorly lit and there are many height clearance restrictions due to ducts, pipes and beams. This basement space requires improvement in order to ensure the structural integrity of the building is maintained. This work would also improve its utility for the storage use currently associated with the public arts programs.

Proposed Conservation Work:

A new drainage system and foundation upgrade is proposed for this building. This work would include the demolition of the existing stairs and construction of a new code compliant exterior basement stair entrance. The rubble stone foundation walls are proposed to be re-pointed with the addition of new concrete perimeter foundation supports. The existing beam and supporting posts would be reconstructed with proper anchored saddled and post/beam connections installed. A new concrete floor would be poured to cover the earth floor to improve this space as a storage facility associated with the arts centre. The preliminary cost estimate to complete this conservation project has been estimated by the consultant at \$75,000.

3.2 Exterior Restoration

Current Condition:

The Mathers House is a prominent heritage landmark of Deer Lake Park located facing Canada Way and the Kensington Avenue Interchange of the Trans-Canada Highway. In 2002 an electronic sign for the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts was added to the front lawn of the Mathers House. As part of this work, overgrown shrubbery from the perimeter of the building was removed to improve the long-term conservation of the foundation walls. Unfortunately, the unattractive alterations and deteriorated front facade of the Mathers House now form the 'backdrop' to the electronic sign. The exterior of the Mathers House has suffered from a number of changes over the years which have also contributed to the building's poor design integrity. In 1971, the adaptive re-use of the structure required the removal of the badly deteriorated front veranda, port cochere, and 1960's tower addition.

A new veranda, constructed as a replacement, did not replicate original design details or the original port cochere. The tower, disfigured by the later addition, was reduced in height, but retained the cone-shaped roof. (see attachment #3).

The study has discovered a number of problems with the roof drainage, particularly associated with the veranda. These have contributed to the foundation wall problems in the basement and washed out exterior mortar joints in the granite foundation walls.

Proposed Conservation Work:

An envelope study of the building's overall exterior condition has identified key conservation issues and potential restoration options (short and near term) and their associated costs. Overall the condition of the existing exterior design is fair but in need of some immediate minor maintenance to address water infiltration and related damage.

In the short term, staff will undertake some minor maintenance repairs drawing on existing operating maintenance budgets allocated for heritage buildings. This work would include new roof drainage system, veranda roof repairs and some minor stucco and concrete repairs. The cleaning and repainting of structure, where necessary, would also be undertaken as part of the regular maintenance program.

In the near term, based on the current condition of the building and the results of the study, staff would propose that the re-establishment of the original design configuration of the Mathers House should be pursued. This conservation work would require the demolition of the existing modern veranda and tower additions and reconstruction of the original veranda, port cochere and tower. These works, which would reinstate the original design integrity of this heritage building as seen in attachment #1, is estimated to be in the order of \$240,000.

3.3 Mathers House Gates

Current Condition:

The Mathers House property includes a granite wall and decorative iron gates designed and constructed by Westminster Iron Works in 1912. The gates are one of the best examples of their kind in the City and form an important part of the heritage fabric of the Mathers estate. Past road construction projects have encroached onto the property and the gates are now located within the road right-of-way of Canada Way. (see attachment #4).

The landmark iron gates and the carved granite post with the estate's name "Altnadene" are currently buried by approximately four feet of fill between the road curbs and public sidewalk. The study has determined that the historic piers and gates are in fair to good condition but are in an extremely vulnerable location. The buried iron gates are in the process of deterioration due to being buried in soils. The full extent of their current condition could not be determined without excavation.

Proposed Conservation Work:

Based on the findings of the study, it is proposed that the granite piers and iron gates be relocated to a new location on Deer Lake Avenue at the base of the historic driveway that once led to the Mathers House and under the "porte cochere" entrance. This would ensure the long-term conservation of this key component of the site's heritage landscape and enhance the property as a gateway to Deer Lake Park. The cost of dismantling and reconstructing the granite piers and iron gates and preparing the new location is estimated at \$45,000.00

4.0 PROJECT PHASING AND SOURCES FUNDING

As outlined above, the conservation study completed for the Mathers House has identified three priority areas for conservation works for the significant City heritage building, as outlined in the table below.

<i>Conservation Item</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Repair of foundation, basement flooring and drainage works	\$75,000
Re-establishment of the original veranda, port cochere and tower	\$240,000
Re-location and re-construction of the Mathers House gates	\$45,000
<i>Estimated Total Cost</i>	\$360,000

The City's five year Provisional Annual Capital Program contains an allocation for the upgrade of designated City heritage buildings and landscapes under the City Heritage Projects line item under the Land Assembly and Development component of the Planning and Building section of the Capital Program. Over a 5 year period, \$750,000 has been allocated for this purpose with a capital allocation of \$75,000 available for 2005.

In order to advance the proposed conservation works consistent with the Capital Program, staff are proposing that the works be phased and undertaken over a 4 year period. The first phase of works would provide for the repair of the foundation, basement flooring and associated drainage works in 2005 consistent with the available capital allocation. The major work associated with re-establishment of the original veranda, port cochere and tower is proposed to take place over a two year period in 2006 and 2007. The final phase of work for re-location and re-construction of the Mathers House gates is proposed for 2008.

Sufficient Land Assembly Reserve funds are available for the proposed 2005 expenditure of \$75,000. As noted, this expenditure has been provided for within the Land Assembly and Development component of the 2005 - 2009 Provisional Capital Program, and has been advanced for consideration within the upcoming Annual Capital Program. This report seeks Council expenditure authorization not to exceed \$75,000 for the first phase of works associated with the conservation of the foundation and basement of the Mathers House.

With the approval of the Community Heritage Commission and Council this project would be advanced and completed in 2005. A further report summarizing the results of the first phase of conservation work will be prepared for the Community Heritage Commission, and at that time, as appropriate, staff would seek approval for advancement and expenditure authorization for the planned second phase of conservation work.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Mathers House is a significant civic arts facility and heritage site for the City of Burnaby. Its was acquired in 1971 and designation as a heritage site in 1992. This report outlines the key conservation issues associated with the building's foundation, exterior envelope and landscape features. This report

Planning and Building Department

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seeks the approval of the Community Heritage Commission and Council for initiation of a phased program of conservation works for this significant heritage resource with the intent of conserving this landmark civic heritage building. With Council expenditure authorization, the first phase of works for the conservation of the foundation and basement of the Mathers House would be completed in 2005.



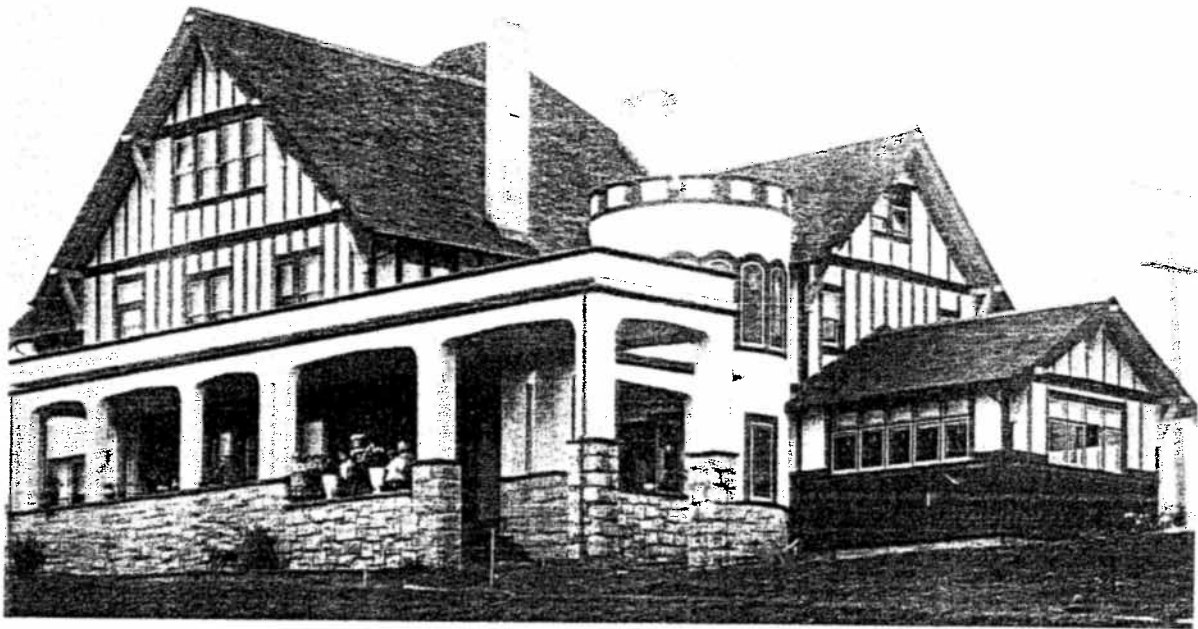
J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

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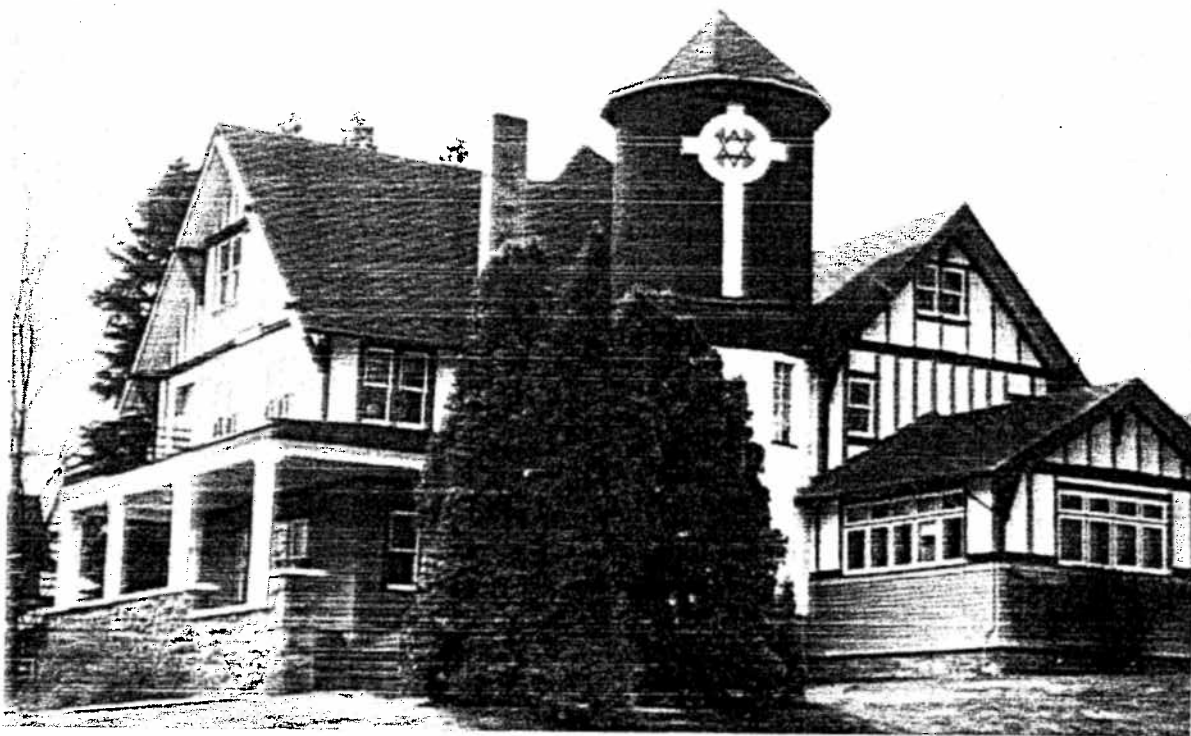
Attachments (4)

cc: City Clerk
City Manager
Director Finance
Director Engineering
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
Assist. Chief Building Inspector, Project Management

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Attachment 1:
W.J. Mathers House, 1913.



Attachment 2:
Mathers House, 1971.



Attachment 3:
Mathers House - Front View, 2004.



Attachment 4:
Mathers House "Altnadene", Buried Entrance Gates

