

**COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION**

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: W.J. MATHERS ESTATE J- ALTNADENE  
6490 DEER LAKE AVENUE (SHADBOLT CENTRE FOR THE ARTS)  
GATE & WALL CONSERVATION PLAN**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. THAT Council approve the expenditure of Gaming Funds up to \$175,000 (inclusive of 12% HST) to complete the relocation and restoration of the Mathers Estate Gate & Wall Conservation Plan, as outlined in this report.
2. THAT Council authorize staff to prepare a Heritage Designation Bylaw for the Mathers Estate Gate & Wall, as outlined in this report.
3. THAT Council forward a copy of this report to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission for their information.

**REPORT**

The Community Heritage Commission, at its meeting held on 2011 February 03, received and adopted the *attached* report outlining a conservation plan for the relocation and restoration of the Mathers Estate Gate & Wall and seeking Council's authorization for funding the project through Gaming Funds. The conservation plan provides the opportunity to complete the relocation and restoration of this significant heritage landscape, as previously approved by Council.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Jordan  
Chair

Councillor A. Kang  
Vice Chair

Councillor R. Chang  
Member

Copied to:	City Manager Director Planning & Building Director Finance Director Engineering Director Parks, Recr. & Cult. Services
------------	--

**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

**DATE:** 2011 January 24

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

**FILE:** 77000 20  
*Reference: Mathers House*

**SUBJECT:** **W.J. MATHERS ESTATE – ALTNADENE  
6490 DEER LAKE AVENUE (SHADBOLT CENTRE FOR THE ARTS)  
GATE & WALL CONSERVATION PLAN**

**PURPOSE:** To outline a Conservation Plan for the relocation and restoration of the Mathers Estate Gate & Wall and to seek Council authorization for funding the project through Gaming Funds.

---

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** the Community Heritage Commission approve and forward the following recommendations to Council:

1. **THAT** Council approve the expenditure of Gaming Funds up to \$175,000 (inclusive of 12% HST) to complete the relocation and restoration of the Mathers Estate Gate & Wall Conservation Plan, as outlined in this report.
2. **THAT** Council authorize staff to prepare a Heritage Designation Bylaw for the Mathers Estate Gate & Wall, as outlined in this report.
3. **THAT** Council forward a copy of this report to the Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission for their information.

**REPORT****1.0 BACKGROUND**

The Mathers Estate was acquired by the City of Burnaby in 1971 for incorporation into the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts. 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. Council adopted a phased program of conservation works proposed by the Community Heritage Commission in 2005 for the Mathers Estate including improvements to the mansion's foundation and basement, exterior restoration and relocation of the main estate iron gate and granite walls.

In 2010, Council authorized staff to seek funding assistance from the Province for the relocation and restoration of the gate and walls of the Mathers Estate as part of a comprehensive Burnaby Access Memorandum (BAM) related to the Port Mann/Highway #1 Project and the upgrade of the

To: Community Heritage Commission  
From: Director Planning and Building  
Re: Conservation Plan for Mathers Estate Gate & Walls  
2011 January 24 ..... Page 2

Kensington/Canada Way intersection. The Province agreed to provide a contribution towards this relocation project, with a commitment that the City relocate the gate & wall sections adjacent to Canada Way and Deer Lake Avenue prior to March 30, 2011.

This report outlines the proposed relocation of the gate and walls to provide for the long-term conservation of this unique heritage site feature and a part of this City Heritage Site.

## **2.0 HISTORY OF THE WILLIAM J. & MARY MATHERS ESTATE “ALTNADENE”**

William J. & Mary Mathers began construction of their "magnificent" estate at Deer Lake in 1912. "Altnadene" was designed by the talented English trained architect and Burnaby resident, Frank 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.

The landscape of the estate featured a landmark granite capstone wall and wrought iron gates surrounding the front garden and terraced lawns of the mansion. The overall architectural intention was to reference medieval English estates by surrounding the ‘castle’ with a stone wall with gated entrances. The stone material for the construction of these walls was quarried from huge granite boulders found on the property. The highly decorative wrought iron gates were designed and made by artisan James A. Blair, a Scottish blacksmith employed by the Westminster Iron Works in 1912. The design for the “double” driveway gate was featured in the company’s original catalogue as “Design No.152”. These gates are very unusual and rare example of their type and are some of the most elaborate surviving examples in the City.

During World War I, the large size of “Altnadene” allowed it to be used, in part, as a convalescent hospital for wounded Canadian 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, operated by the Benedictines of Westminster Priory. The mansion was converted to house a seminary chapel, administration offices, classrooms, study halls and infirmary. In 1954, the building was further renovated by the Universal Life Foundation for both educational and residential purposes. These changes resulted in the loss of the mansion’s handsome original front entrance, veranda and tower.

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 MATHERS ESTATE CONSERVATION STUDY**

The Mathers Estate was the subject of a Council approved architectural study in 2005 to determine a long-term phased program for the mansion's conservation. The Heritage Conservation Study completed in 2005 studied and advanced three priority heritage components of the estate, as approved by the Community Heritage Commission and Council. These included improvement of the foundation and basement, exterior restoration, and iron gate and granite wall relocation.

#### **3.1 Project One: Foundation and Basement**

The Mathers House basement and foundation walls were the first priority phase of works to improve their overall condition. A new drainage system and significant foundation and structural upgrades were completed in 2007. This work included the creation of new basement access stairs and improved public facilities for the operation of the Art Centre's pottery studios and storage areas.

#### **3.2 Project Two: Exterior Restoration**

An envelope study of the building's overall exterior condition has identified key conservation issues and potential restoration options and their associated costs. Overall the condition of the existing exterior is fair but in need of some immediate minor maintenance to address water infiltration and related damage. To address these concerns, staff have undertaken some maintenance repairs since the completion of the report drawing on existing operating maintenance budgets allocated for heritage buildings.

In the near term, based on the current condition of the building and the results of the study, a further detailed design study and cost estimate for the restoration of the exterior of the Mathers House will be pursued. This conservation work would require the demolition of the existing modern veranda and tower additions and reconstruction of the building's original veranda, port cochere and tower. This project, which would reinstate the original design integrity of this heritage building, has been included as a first phase design project in the Provisional 2011 Capital Plan. This project would be the subject of a future report to the Commission and Council.

#### **3.3 Project Three: Gates and Walls**

The Mathers Estate includes four sections of elaborate granite walls and decorative iron gates designed and constructed by Westminster Iron Works in 1912 (see *attachment* #1). The gates and walls are one of the best surviving examples in the City and form an important part of the heritage character of the Mathers Estate. The construction of Deer Lake Avenue in the 1980s required the dismantling of portions of the granite walls. The capstones were salvaged and relocated to the museum's storage facility.

Past road improvements to the Canada Way/Kensington intersection have encroached and buried sections of this heritage feature. The landmark iron gates and the carved granite post with the estate's name "Altnadene" are currently partially buried by approximately two to four feet of soil between the road curbs and public sidewalk. The initial study determined that the historic piers and gates are in fair to good condition but are in an extremely vulnerable location.

Based on the findings of the 2005 study, it was proposed that the granite piers and valuable iron gates be relocated to a new location on Deer Lake Avenue at the base of the historic driveway that once led to the mansion's former "porte cochere" entrance. This approach 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.

#### **4.0 PORT MANN/ HIGHWAY 1 PROJECT**

In 2010, Council adopted the recommendations of a report outlining the terms of the Burnaby Access Memorandum (BAM) with the Transportation Investment Corporation (TICorp) and the BC Transportation Finance Authority (BCTFA) regarding the Province's Gateway Project. The BAM provides for an agreement to undertake a number of projects impacting City lands and infrastructure and includes the improvement and expansion of the Canada Way and Kensington Avenue intersection.

These road improvements require the relocation of the Mathers House walls and gates from their existing location on the Canada Way road frontage and would become a priority project to be achieved prior to March 2011. In recognition of the impact of proposed highway expansion on this City of Burnaby heritage feature, the Province has agreed to contribute \$50,000 towards the costs associated with the relocation and restoration project. In order to achieve the timeline associated with the BAM, staff outlined to Council the need for the relocation of the heritage wall and gates, as had been anticipated by the 2005 conservation study report. The Gateway Project agreement provides for the heritage gate & wall sections to be moved from the road improvement area by March 30, 2011.

#### **5.0 CONSERVATION PLAN**

As outlined, Council agreed to advanced the relocation of sections of the Mathers Estate gate and walls as a City of Burnaby commitment under the BAM agreement to be undertaken before March 30, 2011. Based on Council's adoption of the 2005 conservation study, staff engaged a qualified heritage consultant to develop a detailed Conservation Plan. The plan proposes that the following four remaining components of the Mathers Estate gates and walls be relocated and conserved in a phased approach (see *attachment 2*):

##### **5.1 Phase I – Driveway Gate & Wall Relocation**

The first priority of the Conservation Plan would be to undertake the dismantling, relocation and restoration of three portions of the granite walls and gates.

##### **5.1.1 Main Entrance Gates & Wall**

The primary feature of the estate's landscape remains the elaborate driveway gates and wall that formed the main entrance to "Altnadene" from the old Douglas Road (now Canada Way). This feature would be entirely dismantled and relocated above and adjacent to the sidewalk on Deer Lake Avenue at the base of the original estate driveway. Investigation has revealed that the buried ironwork survives in good condition. All sections of the iron work will be removed to an off-site location to be restored and repainted. Missing from the gates are the two electric globe lamps that stood on top of the two driveway posts. It is proposed that these lamps be replicated based on historic photographs and designs and reinstalled. The double-set of driveway gates would be anchored in a closed position. The smaller side

gate will be anchored in a half open position to allow for pedestrian use of this entrance to access the driveway walk and estate lawns (see *attachment 3*).

The 135 feet of granite wall and capstones form a substantial feature fronting Canada Way. It is proposed that this surviving section of wall would be dismantled and reconstructed to flank the restored driveway gates. This restored wall design feature would visually anchor and enhance the restored main entrance gates.

### **5.1.2 West Entrance Gate Posts**

The West Entrance Gates once provided an alternate entrance to the estate from Gilpin Avenue. The former wrought iron gate once located here has been lost. However, substantial granite gate posts which remains will be relocated to provide a new feature to flank the estate's former driveway. This new west entrance will provide the estate with a more prominent design feature and assist in establishing a visual connection between the mansion's former front entrance and veranda with the modern pedestrian path and entry to the Shadbolt Centre for the Arts.

### **5.1.3 West Wall and Post**

This short section of granite wall and post marks the north-western corner of the estate and is currently in poor condition. The proposed Gateway road works require that this feature be relocated approximately two metres south. It is recommended that this post and existing short section of be rebuilt in this location as it would provide a landscape feature that would still mark the extent of the former estate's boundary and be an attractive feature in the landscape plan.

## **5.2 Phase II – Servant's Gate and Wall Restoration**

The second priority of the Conservation Plan would be to undertake the restoration of the remaining servant's gate and wall utilizing the salvaged capstones currently in storage. This final phase would complete the restoration of this heritage landscape feature. As this work is not part of the Gateway project agreement, it is proposed that it would be delayed for implementation as a future project. This future restoration of the servant's gates and wall would be intended to be extended to connect with the relocated wall and driveway gates utilizing salvaged granite currently in storage.

The advancement of Phase II of the restoration project would be advanced to Council as a future report to initiate a new project and expenditure within the Community Heritage Commission's ongoing Capital Program.

## **6.0 HERITAGE DESIGNATION**

In 1992, the designation bylaw of the Mathers Estate as a City heritage site did not include provision for the protection of the gates and walls surrounding the mansion, given the uncertain future of this heritage feature. The proposed Conservation Plan provides the opportunity under a Heritage Designation Bylaw for the continued recognition and protection of the Mathers Estate gates and walls. This action would be consistent with the City's adopted civic heritage policies and demonstrate the significance of this heritage feature as part of "Altnadene" and the Deer Lake Park Heritage Precinct. Following the conclusion of the proposed Conservation project staff would pursue a future report to the Community Heritage Committee to implement the recommended Heritage Designation Bylaw for the Gate & Walls for the consideration of Council.

To: Community Heritage Commission  
From: Director Planning and Building  
Re: Conservation Plan for Mathers Estate Gate & Walls  
2011 January 24 ..... Page 6

## **7.0 FINANCING**

Financing for the completion of this heritage project is proposed to be drawn from Gaming Funds which have been designated to provide for capital improvements for heritage projects. This report seeks Council expenditure approval for this project not to exceed \$175,000, with repayment to the Gaming Fund of \$50,000 to be provided to the City under the Gateway agreement. A capital funding allocation for the Mathers Estate Gate and Wall relocation project has been advanced for Council's consideration and approval as part of the Provisional 2011-2015 Annual Financial Plan in the Planning Department's Capital Program for City heritage projects.

## **8.0 NEXT STEPS**

The Conservation Plan for the Mathers Estate Gate & Walls provides the opportunity to complete the relocation and restoration of this significant heritage landscape as previously approved by the Committee and Council.

Additionally, the future designation of the Gate and Walls would provide an opportunity to preserve and recognize another significant heritage resource to Burnaby Heritage Register. The advancement of Phase II of the restoration project would be advanced to Council as part of the Community Heritage Commission's ongoing Capital Program. The completion of this restoration project will substantially improve and enhance the Mathers Estate which forms a prominent landmark for both the arts centre and the Heritage Precinct of Deer Lake Park.

With the concurrence of the Community Heritage Commission and authorization of project financing by Council, staff will pursue the relocation and restoration of the Mathers House Gate and Walls as provided for in the Conservation Plan as outlined in this report.

B. Luksun, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JW:tn

### ***Attachments***

cc: City Manager  
Director Finance  
Director Engineering  
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services