

November 9, 2017

Re: 1525 Shasta Place

Mr. Ken Johnson, President, Hallmark Heritage Society

Dear Mr. Johnson,

I am writing to express our extreme disappointment in the position the Society has taken with regard to the demolition of this heritage-registered house.

Not only has this historic Rockland home earned a writeup of over a thousand words by the Victoria Heritage Foundation, but it is also featured on one of our four Heritage Walking Tours.

Although the City claims to be “committed to the preservation of heritage,” the fact that it has hired only one heritage planner speaks volumes. But we expected more from the Hallmark Society, more than merely a request for photo documentation. This is a completely inadequate response to the imminent loss of yet another heritage building.

What message does this send to owners and developers about our respect for heritage? Last year an 1890’s Ridgway Wilson carriage house at 1326 Richardson Street was demolished with nary a murmur from the Hallmark Heritage Society. Now the Society chooses not to contest the demolition of a registered house that is brimming with history. The value of 1525 Shasta is not in a “holistic central theme,” but in the very “layering of styles” that gives it distinction and charm. The layering that was the result of rescued architectural features from the mindless demolitions of earlier decades.

What interesting timing. Sam Bawlf passes away one year and the very next, his legacy is demolished. That’s the respect shown the man who developed the City’s first heritage policies and enacted BC’s first Heritage Conservation Act.

Rockland’s local area planning begins in 2018. The Hallmark Society’s betrayal of 1525 Shasta does not give us any confidence that our efforts to preserve heritage in Rockland will be supported.

Sincerely,
Janet Simpson, President