

Staff Report



Development Services Department

www.kitchener.ca

REPORT TO: Heritage Kitchener

DATE OF MEETING: March 4, 2025

SUBMITTED BY: Garett Stevenson, Director of Development and Housing Approvals,
519-783-8922

PREPARED BY: Deeksha Choudhry, Heritage Planner, 519-783-8906

WARD(S) INVOLVED: Ward 10

DATE OF REPORT: February 5, 2025

REPORT NO.: DSD-2025-075

SUBJECT: Heritage Permit Application HPA-2025-V-001
21 St. Leger Street
Porch Reconstruction

RECOMMENDATION:

That further to Section 42 of the Ontario Heritage Act, Heritage Permit Application HPA-2024-V-001 be approved to permit porch repairs and reconstruction at the property municipally addressed as 21 St. Leger Street in accordance with the supplementary information submitted with this application and subject to the following condition:

1. That the final building permit be reviewed, and heritage clearance be provided by heritage Planning Staff prior to the issuance of the building permit.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

- The purpose of this report is to present Heritage Planning Staff's recommendation for the proposed porch reconstruction at the subject property municipally addressed as 21 St. Leger Street.
- The key finding of this report is that the proposed porch reconstruction meets the guidelines within the Civic Centre Neighborhood Heritage Conservation District (CCNHCD) and would not have a negative impact on the integrity of the District.
- There are no financial implications associated with this report.
- Community engagement included consultation with the City's Heritage Kitchener Committee.
- This report supports the delivery of core services.

BACKGROUND:

The Development Services Department is in receipt of a Heritage Permit Application HPA-2025-V-001 (Attachment A) seeking permission to reconstruct the front porch at the property municipally addressed as 21 St. Leger Street (Fig. 1).

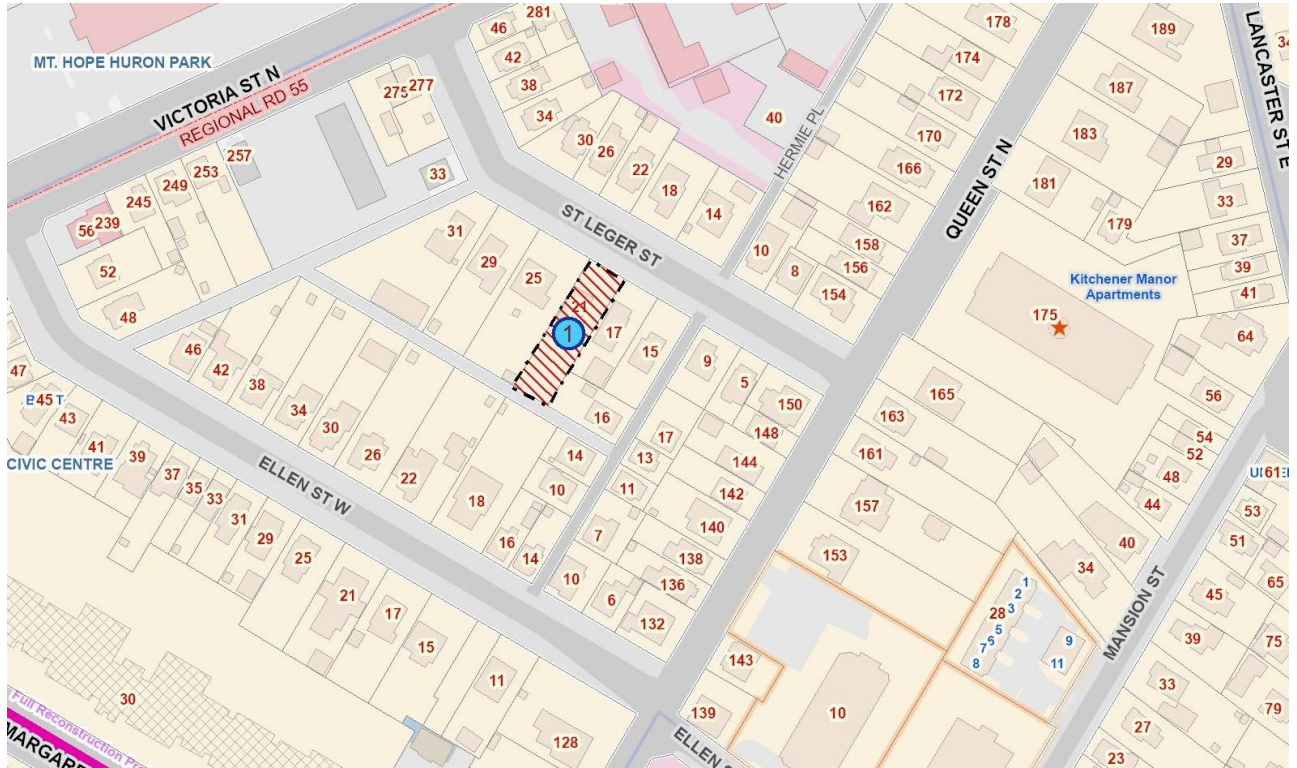


Figure 1. Location Map of 21 St. Leger Street.

REPORT:

The subject property is located on the west side of St. Leger Street, between Queen Street North and Victoria Street North. It is a two-storey Berlin Vernacular brick building built circa 1910. It is a district significance 'C' building (Fig. 2). The subject property is located within the Civic Centre Neighborhood Heritage Conservation District (CCNHCD) and is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.



Figure 2. Front Façade of the subject property in 2023

Civic Centre Neighborhood Heritage Conservation District

The CCNHCD is an important historical residential neighborhood that can be linked to several key periods in the development of the City of Kitchener. This neighborhood helps tell the story of Kitchener’s phenomenal growth at the turn of the 19th century and of the development of its extensive industrial sector. Almost two-thirds of the existing houses were built between 1880 and 1917 and in most cases were occupied by owners, managers, or workers for some of the key industries that defined the community at the turn of the century.

The heritage attributes of the CCNHCD include:

- Its association with important business and community leaders during a key era of development in Kitchener;
- A wealth of well maintained, finely detailed buildings from the late 1800s and early 1900s that are largely intact;
- A number of unique buildings, including churches and commercial buildings, which provide distinctive landmarks within and at the edges of the District;

- A significant range or recognizable architectural styles (Queen Anne, Berlin Vernacular, Italianate, etc.) and features including attic gable roofs, decorative trim, brick construction, porches, and other details, associated with the era in which they were developed;
- The presence of an attractive and consistent streetscape linked by mature trees, grassed boulevards and laneways; and
- Hibner Park, Kitchener's second oldest city park, in the centre of the District.

Proposed Porch Reconstruction

The proposed development includes the reconstruction of the front porch of the existing building. The front porch had to be taken down as it had deteriorated significantly and posed a safety risk as it could have collapsed. The proposed design is more in keeping with the traditional porch design of Berlin Vernacular buildings found in Kitchener. The existing porch is in poor condition and poses a risk of collapse. The existing porch is simple in design, with two square columns and a basic railing design on the lower and upper levels (Fig. 3).



Figure 3. Current Condition of the front porch.

The applicant is proposing to replace that porch with a new porch that will be wider than the existing porch. There will be a faux gable covering the entrance of the house, and the new porch covers almost two-thirds of the front façade. The porch will also include tapered columns with yellow brick pillars and upper wooden columns. The gable will also have western cedar shingles skirting and glass railing on the upper floor balcony (Fig. 4).

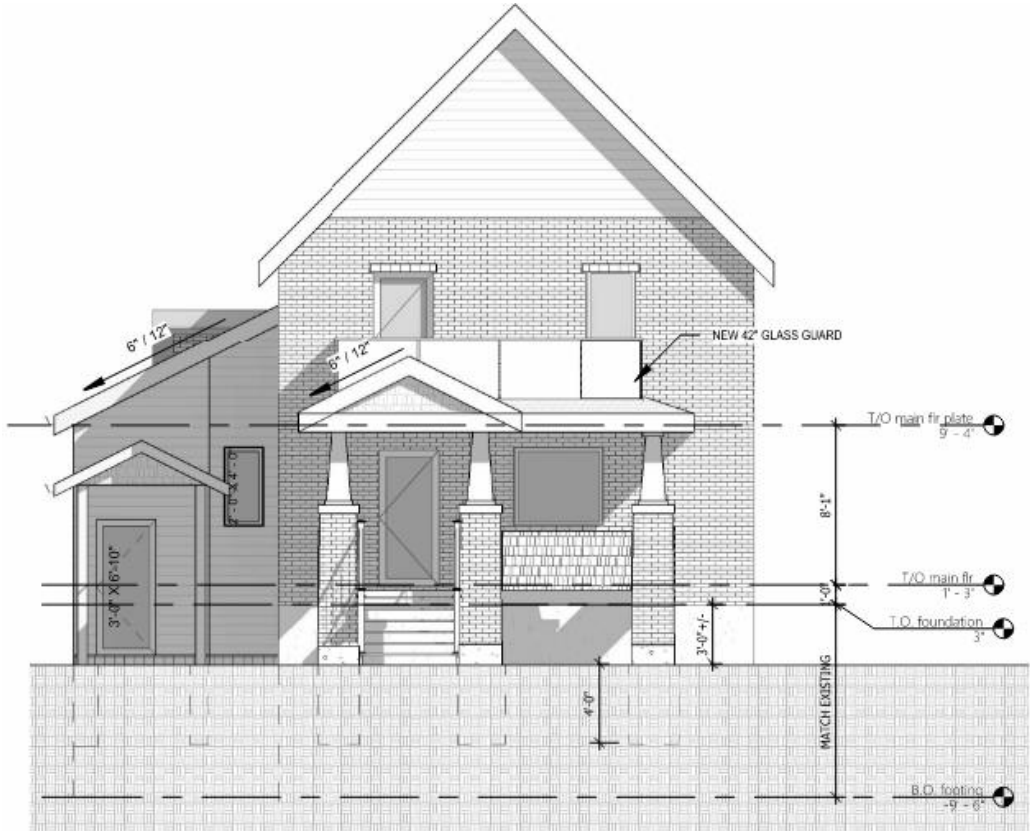


Figure 4. Proposed porch design.

The porch that had to be taken down was not original to the existing building. The original porch was likely demolished prior to the establishment of this neighborhood as a Heritage Conservation District. The proposed porch design will not alter any heritage attributes or the structural integrity of the existing home. As mentioned above, the proposed porch design is compatible with the existing architectural style of the building and will not negatively impact the heritage value of the existing building.

The CCNHCD Plan contains policy direction which pertains to alterations to homes and specifically work done to porches and verandahs. The CCNHCD Plan recognizes porches as being significant features to the appearance of the heritage district that possess both functional and decorative value. While the Plan includes guidelines that strongly discourage the removal of existing porches, it should be noted that this porch was in an advanced state of disrepair. If left unattended, it could have collapsed, posing a significant safety risk. The proposed porch design uses appropriate design, materials, and massing to ensure that the design is compatible with the existing home.

Section 8.5 The CCNHCD Plan contains guidelines regarding porches and verandahs:

- *Removal or substantial alteration to the size, shape and design of existing porches is strongly discouraged.*
 - The existing porch is not original to the building and is basic in design. It does not contribute to the cultural heritage value of the building.
- *Do not remove or cover original porches or porch details, except for the purpose of quality restoration. Prior to executing any repairs or restoration, photograph the existing conditions and research to determine whether the existing is original or an appropriate model for restoration. Use annotated photographs or drawings or sketches to represent the intended repairs.*
 - As mentioned above, the existing porch is not original.
- *For the structural elements of the porch, use the best of current technology including secure footings extending below frost and pressure treated wood for wood framing.*
 - The porch deck will be composite wood, which is an appropriate material for porches within the District.
- *For decorative elements such as gingerbread fretwork and other trim, wood is still the best choice to recreate the original appearance, but using improved technology such as waterproof glues and biscuit joiners and liquid preservatives and best quality paints to protect the finished product.*
 - Most of the porch elements do include wood, including the tapered columns, the deck, and the cedar shingles.
- *Fibreglass and plastic versions of decorative trims should be avoided. Poor interpretation of the scale or design of applied decoration detract from the visual appearance and architectural coherence of porches and verandahs.*
 - No fibreglass is being used in the proposed porch.
- *Where there are no other reasonable options, fiberglass and plastic versions of these decorative trims may be considered if the appropriate shape and size is available and they are kept in good condition with adequate maintenance of the paint.*
 - N/A

Heritage Planning Comments

In reviewing the merits of the application, heritage planning staff note the following:

- The subject property is located within the CCNCHD, and is designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.
- The subject property is classified as District Significance 'C', meaning it is not a fine or a very fine example of a distinctive architectural style but does have attributes which contribute to the continuity and character of the streetscape and area.
- The existing porch was in an advanced state of disrepair and had to be taken down.
- The proposed work includes the porch reconstruction using a design and material that is appropriate and compatible with the existing building, and generally within the District.
- The proposed work is in compliance with the CCNHCD Plan guidelines porches and verandahs.
- The proposed work will not have a negative impact on the integrity and the heritage character of the building, the St. Leger Street streetscape, or the CCNCHD.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report supports the delivery of core services.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Capital Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Capital Budget.

Operating Budget – The recommendation has no impact on the Operating Budget.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

INFORM – This report has been posted to the City’s website with the agenda in advance of the Council / Committee meeting.

CONSULT – The Heritage Kitchener Committee will be consulted regarding the subject Heritage Permit Application.

PREVIOUS REPORTS/AUTHORITIES:

- *Ontario Heritage Act,*
- *Civic Centre Neighborhood Heritage Conservation Plan*

APPROVED BY: Justin Readman, General Manager, Development Services Department

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Heritage Permit Application HPA-2025-V-001