

January 27th, 2026

Victoria Grohn
Heritage Planner
City of Kitchener
200 King Street West,
Kitchener, Ontario

Dear Ms. Grohn,

Re: 98 College St. - Heritage Application Letter

We appreciate the opportunity to clarify our proposed renovation of the heritage-designated property at 98 College Street in the Civic Centre Heritage Conservation District. From the outset, our approach has been guided by a commitment to preserve the home's architectural character and historic significance. Although the project adapts the 1905 dwelling into eight residential units, we have worked diligently to minimize any impact on the exterior, retaining the building's original form, façades, and key interior millwork wherever feasible. The design balances the need for Ontario Building Code compliance with a strong conservation ethic, ensuring the building remains safe, functional, and true to its heritage context.

To accommodate eight units within the existing structure, we introduced a centrally located, code-compliant rated stairwell with grade access on the east elevation. This stair serves the upper units and safely connects to one basement unit through a rated separation. As the Ontario Building Code requires a second means of egress for upper-level units without direct access to grade, a fire escape—permitted for buildings of this age—was selected. This option was chosen specifically because it maintains a smaller footprint and significantly reduces exterior impact compared to a second enclosed stair. The fire escape has been carefully positioned toward the rear of the building to limit visibility from the street and preserve the integrity of the primary heritage elevations.

The proposed work supports appropriate residential intensification consistent with the City of Kitchener's Official Plan and Zoning By-law policies while ensuring the long-term viability of this heritage resource. By converting the existing office use into eight residential units, the project provides much-needed housing while maintaining the building's cultural heritage value. Only those alterations required for safety and code compliance have been introduced, and all have been designed to be compatible with original materials, avoid permanent damage, and allow for future reversibility. Through this careful balance of adaptive reuse and preservation, the project ensures that 98 College Street remains a vital, functional, and respectfully conserved part of the Civic Centre Heritage Conservation District.

**Consistency with the Civic Centre Heritage Conservation District Plan:
Weber Street Area**

The proposal for 98 College Street has been developed to respect and uphold the policies and objectives of the Civic Centre Heritage Conservation District Plan, particularly those pertaining to the Weber Street Area. The project demonstrates strong alignment with the following key directives:

3.3.5.2.a) Protection and retention of existing heritage buildings and architectural features

The design prioritizes the conservation of the existing 1905 structure, maintaining all primary exterior façades and limiting interventions to only what is required for compliance with the Ontario Building Code. This approach supports the District Plan's emphasis on retaining original heritage buildings and their defining architectural elements.

b) Maintaining residential streetscape character through appropriate built form, materials, roof pitches, architectural design and details

The proposal preserves the building's established massing, including the prominent front porch and roof forms that contribute to the streetscape character. Restoration of exterior elements will further reinforce the traditional residential aesthetic encouraged along the Weber Street corridor. The Red brick will be matched where any minimal infill is required and the fire escape is noted to be a powder coated black to match existing wrought iron elements and reduce visual impact.

c) Priority for adaptive reuse of existing buildings

In keeping with the Plan's direction to prioritize adaptive reuse over redevelopment, the project converts the existing office use into eight residential units. This adaptive reuse both conserves the heritage character of the century home and supports broader municipal goals for residential intensification. The introduction of new residents will also help strengthen the neighbourhood's vitality while retaining its historic fabric.

d) Sensitivity to adjacent heritage resources in cases of redevelopment

Although this guideline primarily applies to new construction, the principle of compatibility remains relevant. The proposal does not involve redevelopment; instead, it focuses on reusing the existing structure. As a result, the scale, height, massing, and materials remain inherently compatible with surrounding heritage properties.

e) Shadow study requirements for buildings over five storeys

This provision is not applicable, as the project maintains the existing low-rise residential scale and does not propose any vertical additions.

f) Applicability of design guidelines for major alterations or additions

The project does not include major additions or significant expansions to the building's footprint. Nonetheless, the design approach aligns with the overall intent of the District Plan's design guidelines by ensuring that all work reinforces the heritage character and minimizes impacts on defining attributes.

Consistency with Parks Canada's Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada

The proposed adaptive reuse of 98 College Street is consistent with the Parks Canada *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, which establish a nationally recognized framework for conserving heritage resources through informed planning, respectful intervention, and long-term stewardship. These guidelines emphasize understanding the heritage value of a historic place, planning interventions carefully, and ensuring all work protects character-defining elements. In keeping with these principles, the project approach prioritizes minimal intervention and the retention of significant historic fabric wherever feasible. The resulting design supports both the continued use of the building and the ongoing preservation of its cultural heritage value.

1. Alignment with the Conservation Decision-Making Process

The project follows the Parks Canada conservation sequence—understanding, planning, and intervening. A thorough assessment of the building's heritage features, both exterior and interior, has informed the design approach. This ensures that interventions respond appropriately to the building's condition, its evolution over time, and its significance within the Civic Centre Heritage Conservation District.

2. Appropriate Use of Conservation Treatments: Preservation and Rehabilitation

The proposed work relies primarily on preservation and rehabilitation, two of the conservation treatments identified in the Standards and Guidelines. Rehabilitation is especially applicable in cases where ongoing use requires modifications to meet functional needs—such as introducing residential units—while preservation focuses on maintaining and repairing character-defining elements. The project retains the historic façades, roof forms, and key interior millwork, intervening only where necessary to meet contemporary code and safety requirements.

3. Protection of Character-Defining Elements

Consistent with the Standards, all interventions are designed to protect and not obscure or damage the building's character-defining elements. By maintaining the original massing, front porch, and exterior detailing, and by retaining interior heritage features where feasible, the project meets the requirement that interventions respect and protect heritage value. Physical changes are minimal, reversible where possible, and compatible with historic materials and forms.

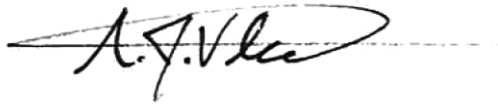
4. Compatibility and Reversibility of Alterations

The Standards highlight the importance of ensuring new work is physically and visually compatible with the historic place while remaining distinguishable from the original fabric. The renovation achieves this by limiting alterations to those required for residential conversion, ensuring any new elements are unobtrusive and sympathetic to the building's architectural language. This approach reflects the national guideline's emphasis on reversibility, allowing future restoration of heritage elements where desired.

5. Support for Adaptive Reuse in Heritage Districts

The Standards and Guidelines specifically address the conservation of heritage districts and cultural landscapes, noting that adaptive reuse can be an effective means of ensuring the ongoing viability of historic places. The conversion of the former office use to eight residential units exemplifies this principle, providing renewed purpose while safeguarding heritage value. This aligns with guidance for heritage districts outlined in the federal framework

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A.J. Vlcek", written over a horizontal dashed line.

A.J. Vlcek B.A.(Hons.), M.Arch, OAA
Senior Associate