



FORMAL REPORT

To:	Mayor Strathdee and Members of Council
Prepared by:	Jason Silcox, Building Inspector
Date of Meeting:	12 June 2018
Subject:	DEV 26-2018 Request for Sign Variance (6 Jones Street East)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this request is to present Council with information on a sign permit application submitted by the owner of 6 Jones Street East and staff's decision not to issue the permit. The owner is requesting that Council grant a variance to the Town's Sign By-Law.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT DEV 26-2018 Request for Sign By-law Variance (6 Jones Street East) report be received; and,
THAT Council does not approve a variance to the Town of St. Marys Sign By-Law for 6 Jones Street East.

BACKGROUND

The property at 6 Jones St East sits in the Town of St. Marys' "Heritage Conservation District". The owners have submitted a sign permit for an internally illuminated box sign for the façade of the building.

Applications for a sign permit at this address needs to be submitted and reviewed by both the Heritage Conservation District Committee and the Heritage Committee as well as the building department to make sure they comply with all Town by-laws and guidelines of the Heritage Conservation District Plan.

REPORT

Staff have reviewed the application for a sign permit for 6 Jones Street East. Upon staff's review of the Sign By-Law No.33-2005 and upon review of the Heritage Conservation District Plan guidelines it was found that the application did not meet several requirements in the Sign By-law or the Heritage Conservation District Plan.

Under the Sign By-Law, Section 9.0 Central Commercial District: "(a) box fascia sign or an internally illuminated sign is prohibited in the Central Commercial District".

In addition, plexiglass and aluminum materials are discouraged unless it can be demonstrated that these materials won't detract from the building / or neighbouring buildings.

The guidelines of the Heritage Conservation District Plan reference new commercial property in several locations in the plan. All refer to respecting the existing architecture of the Heritage Conservation District. It makes mention that improvements to non-heritage buildings are to be sympathetic to the overall character of the district and the streetscape. Section 4.7 "Building Signage" states that "Commercial signs should be seen as a potential to contribute to, rather than detract from, the character of the area." It also states that "Where appropriate, corporate image requirements for signage such as specific colours and profiles, should be adapted to be compatible with the character of the District."

The Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee (HCDAC) and Heritage St. Marys have reviewed the application and recommended approval of the application on the condition that the sign will not be backlit. The applicant has agreed to remove the lighting option from the sign.

Despite support from the HCDAC and Heritage St. Marys, the proposed sign is still a prohibited sign under the Sign By-law. In staff's review, the proposed sign doesn't take into account the overall character of the district and streetscape, and does not meet the test of "contributing to, rather than detracting from the district". Recently a similar test was applied to a heritage permit application by Tim Hortons which resulted in the company having to revise their planned renovations. When considering the application for 6 Jones Street East staff must also consider this recent precedent for consistency.

Based on the application submitted, considering recent precedents, and considering the fact that that the proposed sign is not permitted under the existing Sign By-Law, staff is not authorized to approve the sign permit application.

SUMMARY

The proprietor for 6 Jones Street East has made an application to replace an existing sign with a new sign, the application was forwarded to the Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee and Heritage St. Marys.

The Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee and Heritage St. Marys reviewed the application and recommended approval of the application if the sign was not backlit and it would be in the same location as the current sign.

Staff has reviewed the application and is unable to authorize the permit because the type of sign applied for is not permitted in the Sign By-Law. The applicant has requested a variance from Council.

Staff recommends that a variance not be granted for the following reasons,

- 1- The proposed sign is not permitted in the Sign By-law 33-2005, section 9.0(a),
- 2- The proposed sign is not sympathetic to the Heritage Conservation District Plan, and
- 3- The proposed sign does not follow the guiding principles of the Town of St Marys Strategic Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

STRATEGIC PLAN

☒ Staff's recommendation is supported by the following priorities, outcomes, and tactics in the Plan.

- Pillar #4- Culture and Recreation and Pillar #5 Economic Development
 - Strategic Priority Area: Downtown Revitalization Plan
 - Tactic(s):
 - New development should conform to the existing heritage aesthetic as per either the Heritage Conservation District Plan or the new cultural initiatives approach.
 - Investigate options for incentivizing or enforcing standards for heritage properties after the review of the HCDP.
- Pillar #5- Economic Development:
 - Outcome: Emphasize Culture as a Key Economic Driver for the Community
 - Tactic(s): Provide an attractive and well-functioning streetscape in the downtown core.

OTHERS CONSULTED

As noted in the attached documents.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1-Staff Report from the Heritage Committee dated May 25, 2018.
- 2- Staff Report from the Heritage Conservation District Committee dated May 25, 2018.
- 3-Picture of current store front.

REVIEWED BY

Recommended by the Department



Grant Brouwer
Director of Building and Development

Recommended by the CAO



Brent Kittmer
CAO / Clerk