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ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST

December 18, 2014

DEC 22 2014

RECEIVED

Ontario Heritage Trust
10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, ON
M5C 1J3

To Whom It May Concern

**Re: Notice of Intention to Designate - Victoria Block
132 King Street West, Community of Chatham (City)
Municipality of Chatham-Kent**

Council of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent at its meeting on Monday, December 15, 2014 approved the Intention to Designate the property known as the Victoria Block, located at 132 King Street West, Community of Chatham (City), under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, for its cultural heritage value or interest, as defined by one or more of the Criteria under *Ontario Regulation 9/06*.

The cultural heritage value or interest of the subject property is described below in accordance with the above noted Criteria.

Design Value or Physical Value - Ontario Regulation 9/06, Section 1(2)1

The Victoria Block is a restored Renaissance Revival, late-nineteenth century commercial block. The property consists of a three-story commercial building, with a store front on its King Street, first-level frontage, and windows illuminating office/residential space on the second and third stories. The building is well designed for its corner, with the northeast corner of the building angled around the corner of the intersection. Entrance to the second and third levels is at the rear, Fifth Street corner of the building.

Historical Value or Associative Value - Ontario Regulation 9/06, Section 1(2)2

What is now the Community of Chatham (City), within the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, began on a February day in 1793 when Sir John Graves Simcoe, Upper Canada's (Ontario) first Lieutenant-Governor, came to the forks of the river, which he had recently named the Thames. He stopped to look at a mill "of curious construction," and reconnoitred the area. He decided that this would be a good place for a naval establishment, and decided to call it Chatham. He sent Deputy-Surveyor Abraham Iredell to complete a survey of the town-site, which he did in

August of 1795. That survey consisted of the streets which we still know as the downtown core of Chatham. The most prominent intersection, in Iredell's survey, and still today, is that of King and Fifth Streets.

Despite being surveyed in 1795, the settlement of Chatham was largely one in name only until the early 1830's. Settlement was just too sparse in this part of the country to warrant commercial activity of any size before that time. However, by 1839, a three-story frame building called The Royal Exchange began operation under the ownership of Joseph Northwood on the southwest corner of King and Fifth Streets. It was described as the largest hotel in the Western District (comprising most of what we call Southwestern Ontario today), and had five large sitting rooms, 25 bedrooms, a bar-room, a billiard room and extensive stables and outhouses.

This hotel maintained a prominent place in the business and social life of Chatham until February of 1898. A dance was held there on St. Valentine's night; a few hours later, fire was discovered. The temperature recorded 15 degrees below zero that night, which made fighting the fire even more difficult and by the next day, the frame building was no longer inhabitable, and a "royal" epoch had come to an end.

However, this was not the end for this property occupying such a prominent spot in the city. The following year, Mrs. Isabella Garner erected the Victoria Block. There was a men's clothing store (Thornton & Douglas) at the street level, and rental offices on the second and third floors. As such, the building continued to participate in the commercial life of the city until at least the 1950's. During this period subsequent tenants included five and dime store S.H. Knox & Co., which later merged with F.W. Woolworth, and later The Bank of Nova Scotia. In 1957, the building got a new, mid-century modern style façade of aluminum and glass panels, and the Weymur Building continued to occupy the spot into the 21st century.

In 2008, local businessman Dan Warrener purchased the building, by this time vacant and looking very tired. In his imitable way, Mr. Warrener gave it a new lease on life, by uncovering the Victorian splendour of the Victoria Block. He removed the 1950's façade, and restored the 1898 building, with modern renovations inside to encourage new businesses to locate there. Today, 138 King Street West once again anchors a major intersection in downtown Chatham and hopefully, will continue to do so for many years to come.

Contextual Value - Ontario Regulation 9/06, Section 1(2)3

The Victoria Block anchors the southwest corner of one of the primary intersections in the downtown core of Chatham. It serves as an unofficial entrance to the west side of the downtown, inviting people to travel further down the street.

The following Heritage Attributes have been identified on the subject property:

- well-defined stringcourse separating the street level from upper levels of the building
- pilasters, with Corinthian capitols, placed at regular intervals on both the King and Fifth Street facades, moving from the stringcourse to the cornice
- large, wood-framed shop windows, with diamond-shaped, cut glass transoms, and prominent wooden shop door
- garlanded limestone lintels above all second story windows
- limestone pilasters separating second story windows
- limestone sills on all upper story windows
- Romanesque windows on the third story, with brick and limestone labels
- Limestone and brick, segmented labels on Fifth Street, street-level windows and doorways
- decorative brick corbelling, just under and supporting the cornice

Notice of Intention to Designate was published on the Chatham-Kent home webpage on December 17, 2014.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (519) 352-8401 Ext. 3045.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Nagata". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Brian Nagata, Junior Planner
Planning Services

C: Municipal Heritage Committee