

Summary of comments regarding proposed alterations to original library building

The original portion of the Langley Library was placed on the Langley Reister of Historic Places in 2009. As indicated in Ordinance 895 establishing the Langley Historic Preservation Commission, the primary purpose of the Commission is to **“Safeguard the heritage of Langley as represented by those buildings, districts, objects, sites and structures which reflect significant elements of Langley’s history and character.”**

At the November 8, 2022 meeting of the Langley Historic Preservation Commission, members discussed the presentation regarding proposed changes to the original portion of the Langley Library made to the Commission on October 11, 2022.

Following is a summary of that discussion:

1). General:

No issues were expressed regarding items related to the roof, cladding, signage, and windows as the proposal maintains the historic nature of these items, and upgrading the windows to improve energy efficiency while maintaining the original look is within the Commission’s guidelines.

2).Fireplace:

Some concerns were expressed regarding the proposed alteration to the fireplace. There were no problems with having a T.V. screen on drywall above the fireplace, but the majority opinion was that the proposal to replace the brick and mantel with drywall leaving only the opening would essentially eliminate all trace of the original fireplace.

The majority felt that, because the fireplace was an important feature of original building, the fireplace and chimney should be retained as in 2009 (i.e. mantle, brick and hearth), or at least some brick be retained around the opening. The opening might be closed with glass or plexiglass for safety if deemed necessary.

A minority opinion was that, since the fireplace is no longer functional, the opening could be covered with drywall to create additional wall space.

3). Original East Entry (door, steps):

Although the door was a solid wood door in 2009, no concerns were expressed regarding returning the door to the original 1923 look.

The existing concrete stairs should be repaired and retained.

4), Proposed “seating area” on East Side:

While not directly a part of the original building, or present in 2009, numerous concerns were expressed regarding the proposal to create a “seating area” on the East side of the building. Retention of the steps, which were a feature of the original building, would preclude a raised deck.

Other concerns expressed included: Not in keeping with the historic character/scale of the original building as seen in 1923 and 2009, and not in keeping with the small community character of the town. A very small area and not usable for extended periods of time during the year. Located at the intersection of two major streets and susceptible to traffic noise. Other, more spacious, open air seating areas exist (e.g., Boy and Dog Park, 2nd Street plaza in front of the Firehouse, north side of Post Office, Community Park). Additional small group meeting/reading rooms proposed within the library should provide additional space for conversation and quiet reading/computer use. The door to a seating area might appear to be an active entrance/exit to the library.

A minority opinion was that some sort of seating area might be created if the librarians felt it was needed.