



SAINT BRIGID'S CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

From Worship Space to Events Space: An Adaptive Re-use Proposal

An application to the City of Ottawa under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act to permit the removal of pews –Submitted by Saint Brigid's Centre for the Arts / Barry Padolsky Assoc Inc, Heritage Consultant. September, 15, 2024

September 15, 2024

City of Ottawa

Client Service Centre

101 CentrepoinTE Drive

Ottawa, Ontario K2G 5K7

Attention: Ashley Kotarba, Heritage Planner

**RE: PROPOSED ALTERATION OF ST BRIGID’S CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
310 ST PATRICK ST OTTAWA, ON: APPLICATION UNDER PART IV OF
THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT**

On behalf of St Brigid’s Centre for the Arts, we are pleased to submit this *Application to Alter* under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act for review by Ottawa City Council. The application is to seek approval to remove the ground floor pews in order to permit the use of the ground floor as a flexible multi-purpose events space.

Although this intervention would somewhat reduce the heritage value of St Brigid’s interior by the removal of one of its heritage attributes (a negative impact), the alteration would have the benefit of creating a space that generates revenue that could be applied to conserving the building’s primary exterior and interior heritage character defining elements— whose conditions have steadily deteriorated —decreasing the unintended risk of losing the integrity of this *historic place*” (a very positive impact).

As requested in your memo dated September 5,2024 during the pre-consultation process, the following information is provided in this submission in support of the application:

1. A completed Heritage Permit application form;
2. Plans showing the location of the affected pews
3. Photos of the pews
4. Description of work, including a reason for the proposed removal/alteration and how this has the potential to impact the heritage attributes of the property
5. Salvage plan for the pews

The attached report includes the following Appendices for reference:

Appendix A: Completed Heritage Permit application form dated Sept.15, 2024;

Appendix B: City of Ottawa Designation Bylaw 129-81 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Appendix C. Memo from BPA dated August 22, 2024

Appendix D: Memo from Ashley Kotarba dated Sept 5, 2024

Appendix E: St Brigid's Building Conditions Assessment RMA+ SH Architects
With input from John Cooke Assoc Ltd Engineers November 2023

Appendix F: Ontario Heritage Foundation/Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation Heritage Easement May 1985 (Steeple)

Appendix G: Ontario Heritage Foundation/Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation Heritage Easement March 1990 (Wall Paintings)

Appendix H: Ontario Heritage Foundation/Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation Heritage Easement June 1991

Please notify us if any further information is required to ensure that this Heritage Permit application is deemed complete. It is understood that the application fee of \$286.00 is to be submitted when requested.

Best personal regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry Padolsky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long vertical stroke at the end.

Barry Padolsky B. Arch., M. Sc. (Urban Design), OAA, FRAIC, CAHP, RCA

CC St Brigid's Centre for the Arts (Patrick McDonald, Pat Kelly, Rosemary O'Brian, Francis Healy)



Table of Contents

Covering Letter.....	1
Part 1, Introduction	4
Part 2, From Worship Space to Event Space	8
Part 3, Existing Conditions	11
Part 4, Description of the work	13
Part 5, Salvage Plan for Pews	15
Part 6, Author's Qualifications	17
Appendices	19



PART 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

St. Brigid's Church at 310 St. Patrick Street was erected in 1889-1890 to serve as the home of anglophone (mainly Irish) Catholics, a community originally part of the predominantly francophone parish centred on the Notre-Dame Cathedral Basilica at 385 Sussex Drive.

In 1981, St Brigid's Church was designated by the City of Ottawa under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. The building, an Ottawa landmark, is a massive limestone structure designed by architect J.K. Bowes in an eclectic Victorian style, with basic Gothic Revival form and extensive Renaissance Baroque Revival detail. The designation includes interior features such as vaulted ceiling, polychromed interiors, wall paintings, altar, iron columns, carved woodwork, stained glass, organ, floors and pews. (See Appendix B: Statement of Cultural Heritage Value).

In 1985, and 1990 grants were provided to the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation to carry out certain conservation actions (steeple repairs and restoration of hidden interior wall paintings) in exchange for a heritage easement on the property (See Appendices F,G, and H).

In 2006, due to a shrinking congregation and the high cost of continued repairs, the Archdiocese announced the closure and de-consecration of St. Brigid's. The parishioners objected vehemently to the closure and took the Archdiocese to court. Their appeal was unsuccessful.

In 2007 the Archdiocese sold property to a group of individual investors who formed St Brigid's Centre for the Arts with the objective of saving the historic structure and providing a centre for Irish-Canadian culture.

For the last 17 years the building has operated as a venue for public and private events (art exhibits, plays, concerts, corporate gatherings) actively supported by significant owner investments in the aging building systems, the adaptive re-use of the basement (Kildare Room, Brigid's Well Pub, commercial kitchen and ample washrooms). A temporary, demountable stage has been installed in the ground floor apse (south end) to facilitate some active use of the main worship space.



Figure 1: St Brigid's worship space looking towards apse (May 2007)



Figure 2: St Brigid's worship space showing temporary demountable stage and temporary performance back-drop (2008)

In 2022, St Brigid’s Centre for the Arts agreed to sell the property to The United People of Canada (TUPOC) for its “embassy”. The tragic story of this failed initiative (at the time of the Freedom Convoy demonstrations in downtown Ottawa) was the subject of national media coverage and involved appeals to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice before being resolved.

In the absence of significant municipal, Ontario or federal heritage grant assistance, and notwithstanding the owners’ personal funding contributions, the limited revenue from rental activities has not permitted the investments necessary to reduce the St Brigid’s Centre for the Arts growing heritage infrastructure deficit.

In 2023, in order to understand the magnitude of the heritage infrastructure deficit, the City of Ottawa, at the request of St Brigid’s Centre for the Arts, engaged consultants to prepare a Building Condition Report. The report, by RMA + SH Architects with input from John Cooke & Assoc Engineers, examined the condition of the building’s heritage character defining elements. The report included an order of magnitude (Class E) cost estimate for a 10-year action plan to address the urgent, short term, medium term and long term actions needed to conserve the building’s deteriorating heritage infrastructure. The estimate, in the order of \$18.2 million excluded soft costs and the renewal of non-heritage but essential features.



Figures 3,4,5: Selected images from St Brigid’s Building Condition Report showing deterioration. RMA+SH Architects/John Cooke & Assoc Structural Engineers (2023)



PART 2: From Worship Space to Events Space

2.From Worship Space to Events Space

To enable some investment in the conservation of St Brigid's deteriorating heritage infrastructure, the adaptive re-use of the ground floor of St Brigid's Centre for the Arts offers an opportunity to somewhat increase revenue by meeting the market demand for an iconic, distinctive, flexible, usable space for social events, weddings exhibitions, performances, conferences and corporate gatherings.

The St Brigid's team has concluded that the simple removal of the existing fixed pews and the levelling of the (two-level) hardwood floor can transform the former worship space into an appealing barrier-free venue that meets the functional and aesthetic criteria for increased usage and revenue generation. The repurposed St Brigid's flexible events space is estimated to have the capacity to accommodate up to 300 to 500 persons depending on the format of the event (eg: performances, cabaret events, weddings and banquets). It is noted that the former St Brigid's Church worship space had a capacity of 538 persons (fixed pew seating).

A recent local example of a successful transformation from worship to flexible event space has been realized at the former All Saints Ottawa Church, (now All Saints Events Space) 330 Laurier Ave East associated with the Working Title restaurant.



Figure 6: All Saints Ottawa transformed worship space (2015) Photo credit: All Saints Ottawa, 330 Laurier Ave East

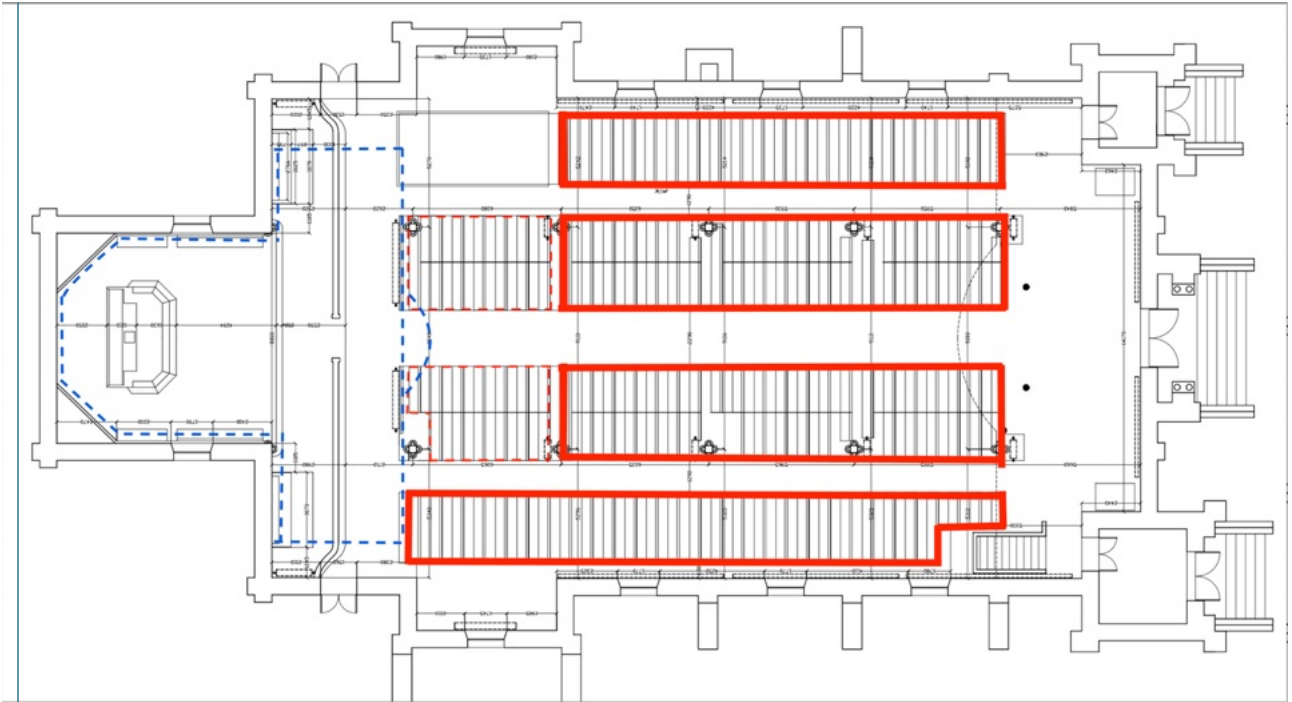


Figure 7: St Brigid's Centre for the Arts Ground Floor Plan showing location of fixed pews to be removed (outlined in red lines); pews removed in 2007 (outlined in light red dotted lines) and location of temporary demountable raised stage (outlined in light blue dotted lines)

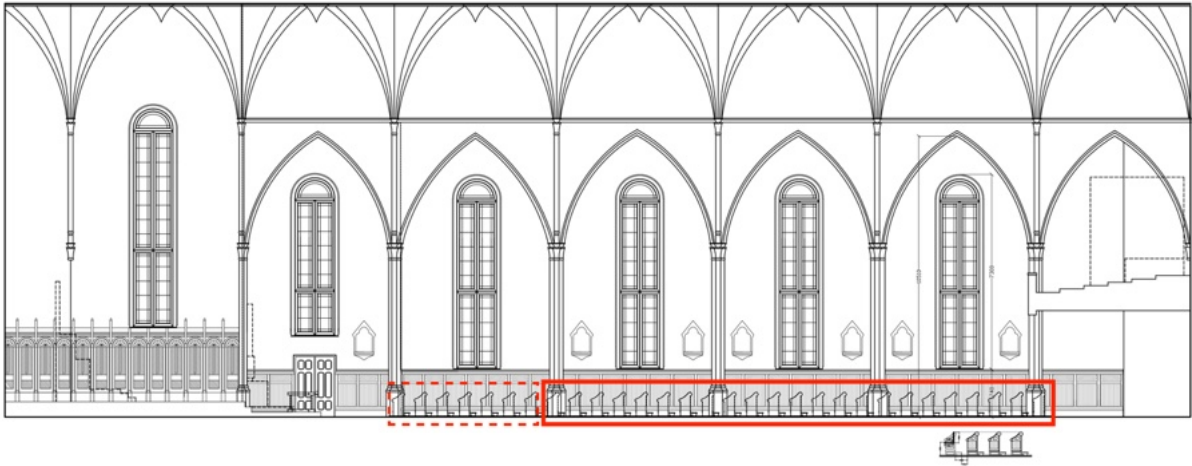


Figure 8: St Brigid's Centre for the Arts Interior Elevation showing location of fixed pews to be removed (outlined in red lines) and pews removed in 2007 (outlined in light red dotted lines)



PART 3: Existing Conditions

Part 3: Existing Conditions

Field inspections have revealed that the existing pews are anchored to 2 inch high platforms composed of hardwood flooring laid in a north-south direction stepping down to the Worship space's walking areas whose hardwood flooring is laid diagonally (see Figure 9). An exploratory opening demonstrates the construction details of the raised hardwood platforms. (see Figure 10).



Figure 9. West Aisle showing pews anchored to raised hardwood flooring



Figure 10). Exploratory opening showing construction detail of raised hardwood flooring.



PART 4: Description of the Work

4. Description of the Work

The scope of the work for which the heritage permit is submitted will include the following interventions undertaken by qualified trades experienced in wood conservation and finished carpentry. The work will be recorded and monitored by a heritage consultant.

Intervention #1: Dismantle and remove the fixed pews from the areas outlined in red (Figure 7 above).

Intervention#2: Label, move and store the pews safely off site.

Intervention #3: Evaluate the conditions, repair, sand and refinish the raised hardwood flooring in the areas outlined in red (Figure 11 below.)

Intervention #4: Install new hardwood flooring in a diagonal pattern on wood sleepers in the areas outlined in grey to create a barrier free level floor matching the level of the raised hardwood flooring (Figure 11 below).

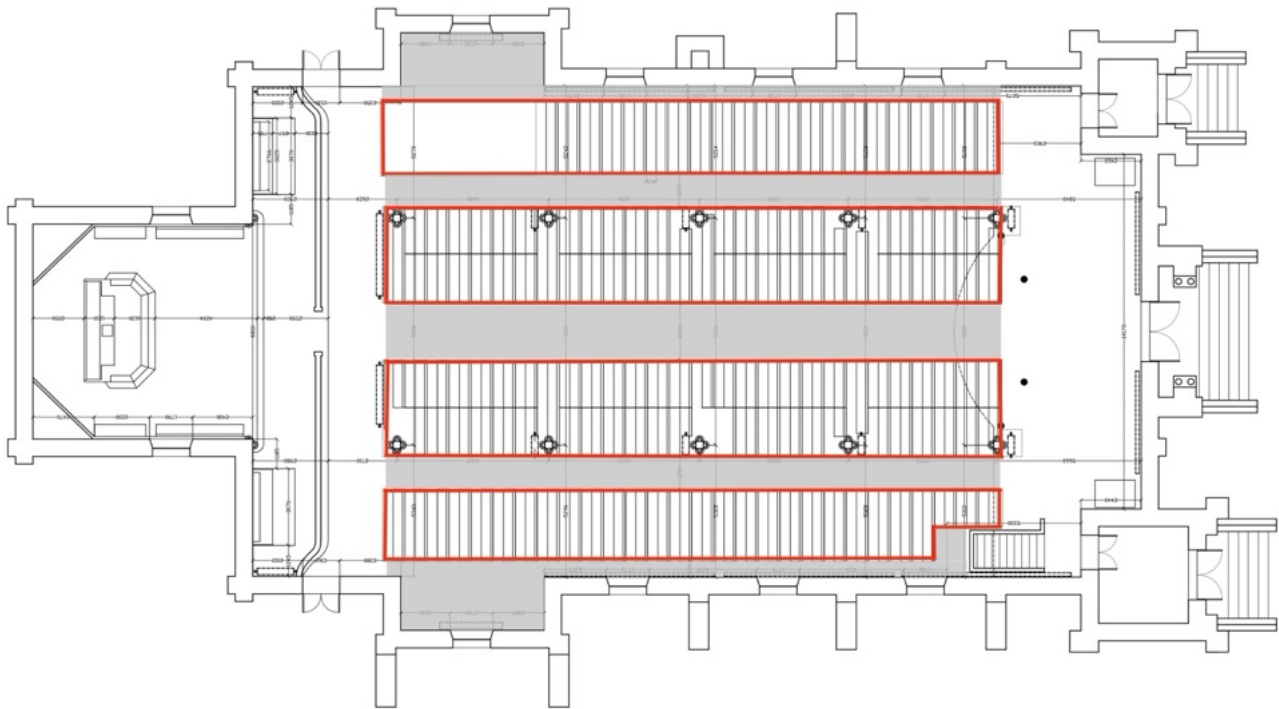


Figure 11: *St Brigid's Centre for the Arts Ground Floor Plan showing areas of hardwood flooring to repaired and restored (outlined in red) and areas of new hardwood flooring (in grey tone) installed to match the level of the restored flooring.*



PART 5: Salvage Plan for Pews

5. Salvage Plan for Pews

The St Brigid's Centre of the Arts has developed a 3 part Salvage Plan for the wood pews to be removed from the ground floor worship space. These are:

1. Prepare an inventory and documented record of the pews.

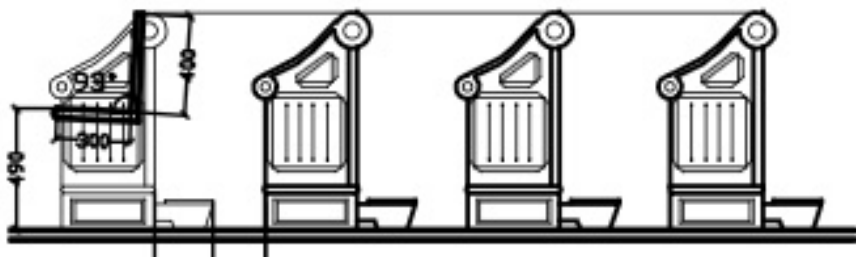


Figure 12: As found drawing of pews (2007)

2. Relocate and conserve a specific number of pews to the Kildare Room and Brigid's Well Pub in the basement of St Brigid's Centre for the Arts as functioning exhibits in the locations shown in Figure 13 below.

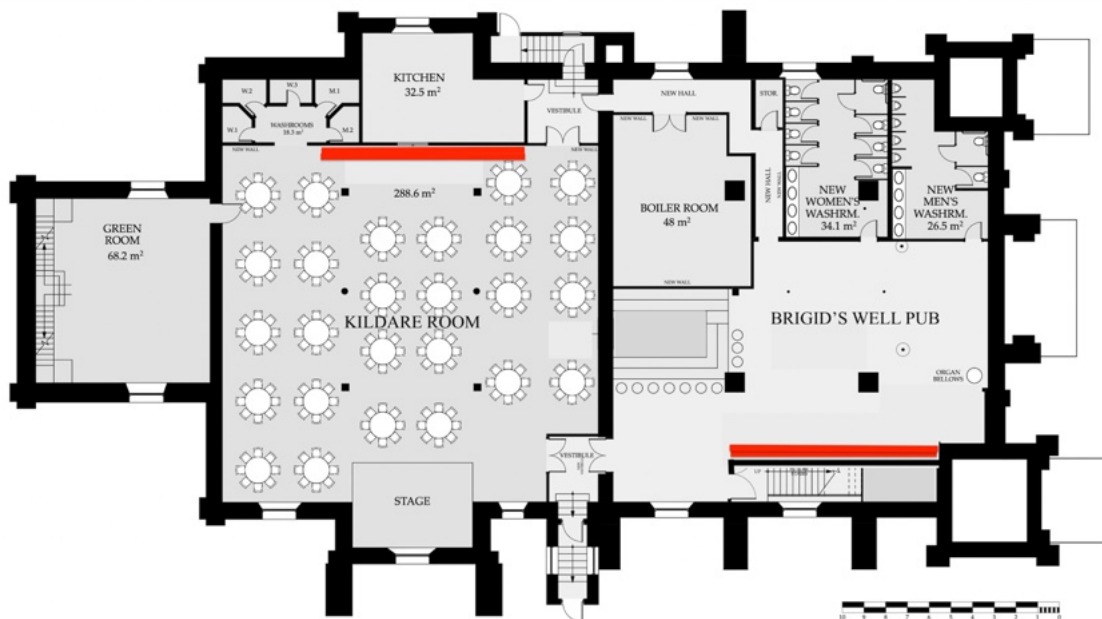


Figure 13: St Brigid's Centre for the Arts basement plan showing proposed relocation of selected worship space pews

3. Offer (gift or sell) surplus pews (in order of precedence) to faith congregations, The Canadian Museum of History, and the public (possibly through charitable non-profit organizations if feasible).



PART 6. Author's Qualifications

6. Author's Qualifications

Barry Padolsky, B. Arch., M. Sc. (Urban Design), OAA, FRAIC, RCA, CAHP is a member of the Ontario Association of Architects (1965); the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, (1965); a Fellow, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, (1987); the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (2003); and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (2006). He has been recognized with 43 national and civic architectural and urban design awards, including 29 for heritage conservation. He was a member of the City of Ottawa Built Heritage sub-committee advising Ottawa City Council on heritage matters (2013-2023) and was honoured with the Order of Ottawa (2021). In 2023, he was appointed to serve on the NCC's Advisory Committee on Planning, Design and Realty.

Padolsky has served as the conservation architect and heritage consultant to the St. Brigid's Centre for the Arts since the property was acquired from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese in 2007.



APPENDICES

Appendices

Appendix A: Completed Heritage Permit application form, dated September 15, 2024

Appendix B: City of Ottawa Designation Bylaw 129-81 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Appendix C. Memo from BPA dated August 22, 2024

Appendix D: Memo from Ashley Kotarba dated September 5, 2024

Appendices E, F, G & H are accessed through the Dropbox link below:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/m86v4uzubzxrod9nt4cvq/AN69XGevP8aFGJRPkMtnO9E?rlkey=85q61bgh9pkn62ufdktk4rzvk&dl=0>

Appendix E: St Brigid's Building Conditions Assessment, RMA+ SH Architects with input from John Cooke Assoc Ltd Engineers November 2023

Appendix F: Ontario Heritage Foundation/Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation Heritage Easement May 1985 (Steeple)

Appendix G: Ontario Heritage Foundation/Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation Heritage Easement March 1990 (Wall Paintings)

Appendix H: Ontario Heritage Foundation/Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation Heritage Easement June 1991

APPENDIX A

OFFICE USE ONLY			
Application #:	Ward #:	File Lead:	
Application Received (dd/mm/yyyy):			
Client Service Centre Staff:	Fee Received:	\$	
		APPLICATION FOR PERMIT UNDER THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT - STAFF LEVEL	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alterations • Additions • Other 	
Application Form			
Applicant Information			
Applicant Name	Saint Brigid's Centre for the Arts (6844 987 Canada Inc.) Attention: Patrick McDonald		
Applicant Address	Address 310 St Patrick Street		
	City Ottawa	Province Ontario	Postal Code K1N 5K4
Applicant Phone	(613) 222-0710	Applicant Email	patrick@sbcottawa.ca
Owner Information (if different)			
Owner Name			
Owner Address	Address		
	City	Province	Postal Code
Owner Phone		Owner Email	
Project Information			
Street Address	310 St Patrick street		
Scope of work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alterations \$286.00 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alterations to Contributing/Grade 1/Part IV properties such as, but not limited to modifications to porches, new dormers, window replacement, or new openings that can be processed under the authority delegated by City Council under the Ontario Heritage Act. • Alterations of Non-contributing/Grade 2 properties that may have an impact on the character of the HCD • Landscape alterations where landscape is an attribute of the Part IV property or an attribute of the HCD • Construction of detached garages or sheds that require a heritage permit 		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Additions \$858.00 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additions less than 30% of the gross floor area of the existing building. • May also include minor alterations to a building. 		
Page 1 of 3 January 1, 2024			

<input type="checkbox"/>	Other \$0 Applications for permits in the following categories: • Restoration • Building maintenance • Landscaping	
Description of Project	Adaptive reuse (conversion) of ground floor worship space to flexible multipurpose events space by removal of fixed pews (see details in illustrated report attached)	
Plans By	Name/Company Barry Padolsky Associates Inc, Heritage Consultant	
	Address 8 Range Road	
	Email barrypadolsky@me.com Phone (613) 298-0553	
Required documents, Drawings and Studies	<input type="checkbox"/> Site Plan/Landscape Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Perspectives/Rendering
	<input type="checkbox"/> Elevations	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
	<input type="checkbox"/> Project Description (1-2 pages)	

Total :

Additional requirements for individually designated buildings (Part IV designation under the Ontario Heritage Act). Please attach the following:

- Photographs that depict the existing building, structures and heritage attributes that are affected by the application and their condition and context
- Site Plan or Sketch that illustrates the location of the proposed alteration, demolition or removal
- Reason for the proposed alteration, demolition or removal and the potential impacts to the heritage attributes of the property

If you are applying for a Part IV Permit (permission to Alter/Erect/Other/Demolish/Remove a Heritage Property designated under s. 29) please complete Part A below. For all other permit applications, please proceed to and complete Part B, below.

Signature

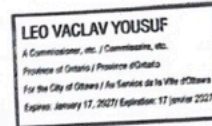
Part "A" - Part IV Permits

I Patrick McDonald (applicant), of OTTAWA, Carleton (City/town of residence), solemnly affirm or swear that all of the information contained in this application is accurate to the best of my information and belief and I make this application conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under Oath and by virtue of the *Ontario Evidence Act*. I further understand that furnishing false information in this application would be an offence under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

SOLEMNLY AFFIRMED/SWORN before me

at City Hall, Ottawa

this 11 day of September, 2024



Patrick McDonald
Signature of applicant

Leo VACLAV YOUSUF
Signature of Commissioner of Oath

Part "B" - All other applications

The undersigned confirms that the information contained in this application is accurate to the best of their information and belief and understands that furnishing false information in any such application is an offence under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Signature of Applicant/Agent

Date

Notes:

1. A separate application for a Building Permit is required.
2. Applications under the Planning Act may be required for this project.
3. The Ontario Heritage Act requires that all applications are processed within 90 days of receipt of a complete application. A complete application includes all required documents, drawings and studies.

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, RSO 1990, c. O.18 and will be used to process this application. Questions about this collection may be directed by mail to Manager, Business Support Services, Planning Real Estate and Economic Development Department, 110 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, K1P 1J1, or by phone at 613-580-2424, ext. 24075.

Print Form

APPENDIX B

BY-LAW 129-81

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

St. Brigid's Church at 314 St. Patrick Street is recommended for designation as being of architectural interest. Erected in 1889-1890, this massive limestone structure with pitched roof and two towers of different heights was designed by J.K. Bowes in eclectic Victorian style, with basic Gothic Revival form and extensive Renaissance Baroque Revival detail.

It has historically served as a parish church for the Irish Catholic working class residents of Lowertown. In its overall exterior appearance, the church is a significant reminder of their contribution to the growth of Bytown and Ottawa.

The interior of St. Brigid's Church is significant for its vaulted ceiling, polychromed interiors, carved woodwork, and stained glass. This designation includes floors, walls, ceiling, windows, and attached fixtures of all interior spaces including the nave and alter area with reredos, side aisle and transepts, the entrance area and organ gallery above. Of particular note are the polychromed interior painting schemes found beneath the existing layer of white paint. Physical investigation of historical photographs have discovered a wide variety of trompe-l'oeil painting techniques including marbelizing, stencil work and figurative murals employed on walls, iron columns, canvas panels, and vaulted ceilings. All decorative wood carving, including but not exclusive to, wainscoting, pews, confessionals, altar and organ are also to be preserved. This designation does not make reference to the basement or areas in the upper floors and towers.

APPENDIX C

MEMORANDUM

To Ashley Kotarba
CC Lesley Collins, Pat MacDonald, Pat Kelly, Rosemary O'Brien, Francis Healy, Ana Cantu, John Cooke
From: Barry Padolsky
Re: St Brigids Pew Removal Proposal
Date August 22, 2024

Hi Ashley,

Thanks for taking my call today. And thank you for forwarding the documents associated with the designation of St Brigid's under Part IV of the OHA and the OHT easement.

As part of my long-established role of as heritage advisor to the owners, I have been specifically engaged by St Brigid's to prepare applications to the City of Ottawa and the OHT (as required) for the following immediate priority #1 short term interventions to St Brigid's upper level (the former worship space):

1. Remove and conserve the existing wood pews
2. Relocate a select number of pews to the St Brigid's basement activity spaces (St Brigid's Well and the Kildare Venue); find appropriate off-site "homes" for the remainder of the pews.
3. Restore the hardwood floors in the zones formerly occupied by the pews (level 0.00 mm)
4. Add hardwood flooring in the aisle space zones, now at a lower level (minus 40mm approx) with new hardwood flooring to raise the level to 0.00mm. This intervention is needed to make the former worship space level and void of tripping hazards.

As you know, these interventions are specifically designed to make the former worship space immediately usable for events that can increase the revenue needed for urgent building repairs and halt the continued deterioration of the heritage character defining elements of this heritage landmark.

Please consult with your colleagues and advise me on the minimum submission requirements for an application to the City under the OHA if required. I hope that the requirements will not be too onerous since there are not the resources available for this task. Please also advise whether the application can be reviewed at a delegated staff level (or whether it requires Council approval). I would hope that an application form and a clear simply illustrated letter would be acceptable.

I would also appreciate advice on the application process to be followed to obtain OHT approval of these interventions.

The St Brigid's team would like to proceed quickly in order to make the "flexible" former worship space available to potential users as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted



Barry Padolsky B. Arch., M. Sc. (Urban Design), OAA, FRAIC, CAHP, RCA

Barry Padolsky Associates Inc. Urban Design and Heritage Consultant

Mobile: (613) 298-0553 Email: barrypadolsky@me.com Address: 8 Range Road ,Ottawa On. K1N 8J3

APPENDIX D



Ashley Kotarba

September 5, 2024 at 3:13 PM

RE: St. Brigid's

[Hide](#)

To: Barry Padolsky,

Cc: Lesley Collins, Patrick McDonald, Pat Kelly, rosemary o'brien,
Francis Healy, Ana Cantu, John Cooke

Hi Barry,

Lesley and I have had a chance to discuss the pew removal, and we feel that this is beyond the authority delegated to staff, so will ask for a full permit to committee and Council. That being said, we think that the fee for a staff level permit (\$286) is most appropriate for this scale of project.

While we have no concern with this, and will expedite the process as quickly as possible, there are a few things we will require from you in order to proceed:

1. Completed application form ([Application for permit under the ontario heritage act - Application Form \(ottawa.ca\)](#)) Please sign under Part "A" on the third page.
2. Application payment of \$286 (to be completed after submitting the application form)
3. Description of work, including a reason for the proposed removal/alteration and how this has the potential to impact the heritage attributes of the property
4. Site plan or Sketch showing the affected pews
5. Photos of the pews
6. Salvage plan for the pews

Since the interior is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, we need to follow the new(ish) process for processing Part IV applications. This requires a few extra items (already listed above), and also an application form that is signed by a Commissioner of Oath. The City of Ottawa provides this service free of charge for heritage permit applications. More information can be found on our website: [Commissioner of Oath | City of Ottawa](#)

I would also encourage you to reach out to the Ontario Heritage Trust to ensure that they have no concerns with this proposal, and to start their permitting process. Graham Forster has been our contact, he can be reached at: graham.forster@heritagetrust.on.ca

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thanks,

Ashley