



Corporation of the City of NEW WESTMINSTER

COMMUNITY HERITAGE COMMISSION

NOTES

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Meeting held electronically and open to public attendance
Council Chamber, City Hall

PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy*
Ms. Maureen Arvanitidis
Mr. John Davies
Ms. Jill Davy
Mr. David Sarraf

Community Member*
Community Member/Alternate Chair*
NWHPS Representative*
Community Member*

ABSENT:

Mr. Samuel Boisvert
Ms. Lindsay Macintosh
Mr. Robert Petrusa

Community Member
Community Member
Community Member

STAFF PRESENT:

Ms. Britney Dack

Senior Heritage Planner, Climate Action, Planning and Development

Mr. Rob McCullough

Manager, Museums and Heritage Services
Office of the CAO*

Ms. Carilyn Cook

Committee Clerk, Legislative Services

*Denotes electronic attendance

1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillor McEvoy opened the meeting at 6:07 p.m. noting that quorum had not been achieved; therefore, Item 4.1 would be addressed first.

Councillor McEvoy recognized that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples and acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a city, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

3.1 November 3, 2021

Procedural note: As quorum was not achieved, adoption of the November 3, 2021 minutes was deferred to the next meeting of the Community Heritage Commission.

4. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

4.1 Heritage Revitalization Agreement and Heritage Designation: 514 Carnarvon Street – Project Update

Britney Dack, Senior Heritage Planner, reviewed the staff report dated December 1, 2021 regarding the Heritage Revitalization Agreement and Heritage Designation applications for 514 Carnarvon Street, advising that this large development which has been ongoing for several years was nearing the end of the Development Review process. She provided an update on the project's status and shared that the project would be going to the Advisory Planning Commission for review on December 7, 2021 and to Council for consideration and, as it requires an Official Community Plan Amendment, Council may put it to a Public Hearing to receive community input.

In response to questions from the Commission, Ms. Dack provided the following comments:

- Recommendations previously received from the CHC have been acted upon and include a comprehensive review to maintain the view of the cathedral from Church Street; the height relationship between the tower and the cathedral; additional and longer stepping of the tower's base, the removal of some balconies and patios to give the cathedral more space; and a design revision of the façade to complement the traditional elements of the cathedral;
- The project has also been reviewed by the New Westminster Design Panel for architectural feedback;
- A number of revisions have been undertaken with respect to the window designs at the tower base, including glazing treatments to reflect the gothic patterns of the cathedral's windows;
- Construction could start as early as within a year; and,
- The approximately 12-15 units of proposed for rental housing would not form part of the strata and would be owned by the church but run by a non-profit organization. Funds received from the rentals would subsidize programs run by the church.

4.2 Heritage Revitalization Agreement Refresh: Principles and Community Consultation

Britney Dack, Senior Heritage Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Heritage Revitalization Refresh Program that was launched in the summer by Council to update the previous policy that was written in 2011. Ms. Dack's presentation outlined the following:

- Definition of a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA);
- Goals of the Refresh project;
- Development options available through the current program; and,
- Proposed community amenities to be considered in the Refresh project.

In response to questions from the Commission, Ms. Dack provided the following comments:

- New Westminster lot sizes and depths are generally larger than those in Vancouver which are mostly around 4,000 square feet;
- HRAs can be considered as an option for development just as rezoning may be an option, in consideration of amenities. However, an HRA on a property with a heritage asset is the preferred option, since it has the opportunity to provide heritage protection to an asset as part of the process;
- Since the implementation of the new Official Community Plan in 2017, it is anticipated that more rezoning applications will be received for smaller scale or infill style projects, as that was a goal of the plan;
- The proposed rental component of the Refreshed policy would address small scale projects, where for larger rezonings (with 10 units or greater) something similar already applies;
- Affordability targets such as subsidized units are not feasible in new construction or refitting at this scale of development, and could not happen without a lot of funding; however, it is a big aspect of larger scale developments where there are more opportunities, and is accounted for in those policies which apply to larger projects;
- HRA projects at this scale are most likely not going to meet true affordability ranges; however, infill housing will help to accommodate the growing population and provide a range of housing choices for the community. It is the City's goal to supply housing in all city neighbourhoods;
- City procurement policies and the perception of preferential hiring of contractors may make it difficult for the City to recruit heritage professionals for projects, as opposed to applicants hiring their own, as they do now. This suggestion by a Commission member will be shared as part of the consultation process for this policy update;
- Houses in the conservation area cannot be demolished without Council consent, which is a form of protection; however, legally it is not as much protection as what would be received through a designation bylaw;

- Equity in the program is also being looked at to ensure that incentives are sufficient and equitable across neighbourhoods. These details will be reviewed during the next step in this process;
- While not a lot of rezoning applications are expected for the Queen's Park neighbourhood, some property owners of houses with a lower integrity on a larger lot may want the option to build a duplex or other infill type. It is anticipated that there will be more HRAs in that area, due to the higher number of heritage assets;
- Commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings, or residential buildings with more than six units, are not being looked at in the Refresh program as there is not currently a gap in the development policy regarding those application types;
- Removal of incentives in the Queen's Park Conservation Area could be explored to offset the density available through HRAs;
- The final sale value of a house or project is not indicative of the profit realized from the sale, as there will be the costs of construction, permitting fees, etc., that have been undertaken; and,
- The goal of HRAs is to have applicants put as much effort and thought into the design of infill housing as they do with the restoration of the heritage house.

The Commission provided the following comments:

- Some owners may want to subdivide their property through this program, which may change the character of the neighbourhood;
- When applications go to Council, it should be known if a rental unit is being lost as that should be a consideration of their decision;
- The Affordable Housing and Child Care Task Force and Committee should also be provided the opportunity to give feedback on this policy update;
- The Metro Building hosted acts such as Ike and Tina Turner which may make it a heritage candidate under the expanded values aspect due to its cultural heritage, even though the building is not architecturally significant;
- Aging in place should be a consideration for future projects;
- Although Statements of Significance generally honour the settler community, the progressive use of the building, including immigrant history and housing are also important to include;
- Although the City is currently focused on solar panels for energy supply to individual homes, consideration could be made in the policy to investigate options to supply geothermal energy, possibly for a city block or high rises such as the project being worked on in Sapperton for Royal Columbian Hospital and Fraser Health facilities;
- Heritage homes are an important asset for the City and its residents, not just the heritage building homeowners;
- Robust City policies will provide clarity for developers and may result in speculator land purchases;

- There is concern around a relaxation of the HRA application process and the possibility of protected homes becoming a target for developers which may ruin what the community worked so hard to conserve through the Conservation Area;
- The biggest problem is increased density in the Queen's Park area, which is part of the incentives program. Adding the opportunity for greater units would increase the value of the properties again and possibly make them ripe for infill development;
- It would be helpful if application recommendations came with a qualifier from staff indicating what may be a good, medium, or bad HRA;
- The fronts and sides of houses requiring protection under some HRAs but not others is confusing as the priority is not clear;
- An example of major intervention to visible characteristics of the front and/or sides of a house would be 208 Fifth Avenue where the house is expected to be moved forward on the property with the side windows being changed;
- There seem to be too many exceptions being made to HRA parameters;
- A good discussion point is that HRAs are not equal across the city as many properties are not in the Heritage Conservation Area and if not more could be asked of the applicant related to restoration; and,
- If a strong benefit cannot be realized on site, and retention is not achievable it could be asked instead that funds be paid into a City "Heritage Fund" for supporting other heritage initiatives.

5. STANDING REPORTS AND UPDATES

5.1 General Inquiries from the Commission

There were no items.

6. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

7. UPCOMING MEETINGS

January 4, 2022

8. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 8:16 p.m.

Original Signed

 Councillor Jaimie McEvoy
 CHAIR

Original Signed

 Carilyn Cook
 COMMITTEE CLERK