

Queen's Park Neighbourhood Heritage Study (QPNHS)
Working Group Meeting

June 25, 2015
Committee Room #2

AGENDA

1.0 Working Group Meeting (Open House) Notes of May 28, 2015

2.0 Open House Review

3.0 Fine-tuning Implementation Strategies

4.0 Next Meeting

Thursday, July 23, 2015
6:00pm
Committee Room #2

Please RSVP to Julie Schueck at
jschueck@newwestcity.ca
or at 604.527.4556

Queen's Park Neighbourhood Heritage Study (QPNHS)

Working Group Meeting Notes of May 28, 2015

PRESENT:

Maureen Arvanitidis (NWHPS)
Rebecca Bateman
David Brett (QPRA), Vice-Chair
Bruce Cheng
Deane Gurney (QPRA)
Gary Holisko
Steve North (NWHPS)
Dave Vallee

CITY STAFF:

Julie Schueck, Heritage & Community
Planner

REGRETS

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy, Chair
Tom Bellamy
Jennifer Wolowic

The May 28, 2015 meeting was scheduled as a public Open House with the purpose of obtaining community feedback for the implementation strategy ideas.

The Open House was held from 5:00pm to 8:00pm in the foyer of City Hall. Approximately 30 people attended and provided comments.

Neighbourhood Character:

- Strongly agree and support!
- Advertise Fourth Avenue as worst paved road in world, charge admission as heritage activity.
- Diversity of housing styles; houses with character.
- Large trees and green years on property is important but also the City needs to look after our trees and green boulevards.
- Round-about (oval) does not work at Fifth St and Fourth Ave. People don't know how they work and I have seen close calls regarding accidents. We need traffic calming. It's like rush hour traffic through QP at certain times of the day.
- Do not build highrises to destroy the neighbourhood character.
- Highrises destroy the sun downs and make the character to become a concrete jungle.
- Improve street lighting to accent heritage character.

Design Guidelines:

- Maintaining mature trees on property is as important as the house itself. They should not be a victim to increase floor space ratio regardless of how "nice" the new/newly expanded house may look.

- I agree maintaining trees on property is important but also the trees on our boulevards especially the large boulevard trees on Fifth St.
- Would really like to see “new builds be compatible with New West Heritage style and design. Like the idea of an inventory and incentives for builders.
- I would rather see imaginative new-home (contemporary) design in the neighbourhood than the cookie-cutter faux heritage houses that will turn QP into a boring neighbourhood.
- Develop definition of appropriate design.
- Existing design guidelines in QP need to be changed – some of the new builds are sad.
- Consider conservation area designation as a tool to retain Heritage.

Incentives:

Allow houses achieving a certain design guidelines point level an increase in allowable floor space.

- Use concept like Vancouver of ‘permissive’ planning where even if all Design Guidelines are met, the Design Panel can deny approval; eg. if still not a good fit with the neighbourhood.
- Density incentives: great idea!
- Have all new construction in QP go before Design Panel.
- New houses should have to meet new guidelines.
- If new house does not meet minimum requirements, shouldn’t be approved at all (not reduce fsr).

Encourage using HRAs for subdivision.

- No comments given.

Allow stratification of existing houses.

- Stratification of 30+ year old houses: great idea!
- Would houses need to have a minimum fsr?
- Will the revised design guidelines include allowable fsr?

Soften implications of Building and other codes.

- No comments given.

Create financial incentives.

- No comments given.

Allow infill housing.

- Coach and laneway houses must conform to the ‘host’ house design.
- Allow infill housing to allow retired older people to keep their houses.
- Will there be a minimum lot size?

- Yes to 4, 5, 6 [the above 3 ideas]
- Maintain minimum garden space, fsr if allowing laneway use.

Provide permit fees rebates

- 50% rebate of HRA fees for professional drawings does nothing to ensure that the design compliments the heritage house.

Use Heritage Revitalization Agreements

- No comments given.

Encourage Heritage Designation

- Define Heritage Designation.
- And outline benefits of Heritage Designation.

Regulations:

- Encourage owners of older apartment buildings in the area to be part of the residential neighbourhood.
- Make a ratio policy for new parks board trees, plants and flowers: eg. 90% native perennials/low maintenance and 10% non-native annuals, high maintenance. This will a) save money and watering time, b) display pride-of0place, and c) help wildlife, bird, and bees return.
- Yes! Any incentives to a) not demolish and b) be rigorous in recycling/reusing are a must!

Density and Affordability:

Consider infill housing, subdivision and/or stratification.

- #1 to a max density – part of the character of the neighbourhood of Q. Pk is space and especially green space.
- An enthusiastic yes to 1. and 2. Careful densification of the neighbourhood is necessary. Consider case-by-case basis.
- The process should be set up so that an inappropriate development/house plan can be stopped before it gets all the way to public hearing – guidelines needed and enforced.
- Decouple the notion of density complementing affordability in a single family neighbourhood in a city that has 5 SkyTrain stations (where densification at these nodes is pre-prescribed in existing zoning already and high rise tower development is now a City approved method of bringing densification).

Protect existing multi-family buildings.

- No comments given.

Encouraging Buy-In:

- Make it known up front and to all that New West is intent on keeping its heritage homes and commercial building stock.
- Encouraging buy-in to heritage conservation is a must.
- Provide some non-cash incentives to have Real Estate and other groups promote heritage to clients.

Other Comments:

- Provide visual images/diagrams to help people to quickly understand the proposed concepts. (See what City of Vancouver has: see attachment.)
- City [should] advertise demolition permit application prior to approval.

Next Meeting:

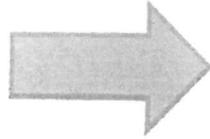
The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 25, 2015
6:00pm in Committee Room #2

2. Character Checklist



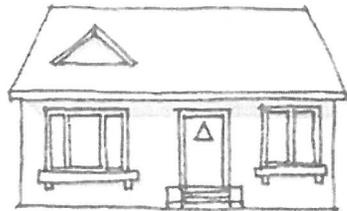
Character Merit

HOME SAVED



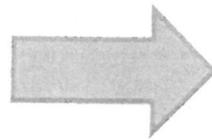
House Retained

- **Increased density permitted** under discretionary zoning provisions.



No Character Merit

HOME REPLACED



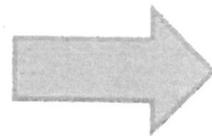
New House

- **Increased density permitted** under discretionary zoning provisions.



Character Merit

HOME REPLACED



New Smaller House

- limited to outright density provisions
- **No discretionary density allowed.**

Shaughnessy to become Heritage Conservation District

Proposal would give the city the ability to stop demolitions, offer incentives to keep old houses

BY JOHN MACKIE, VANCOUVER SUN JUNE 4, 2015



The Rosemary Mansion on Selkirk Avenue in Vancouver.

Photograph by: Ric Ernst, Vancouver Sun

Vancouver is putting some teeth into its Heritage Action Plan.

A report going to council June 9 calls for First Shaughnessy to be named the city's first Heritage Conservation District, which could dramatically change development in the historic neighbourhood.

"For the very first time, we can say no to demolition," said Brian Jackson, Vancouver's general manager of planning and development.

"Before, the First Shaughnessy official development plan would require the applicant to go through a number of significant steps ... but eventually the owner or developer could tear the house down.

"Now we can say no under the Heritage Conservation District. We can also say no without having to worry about financially compensating the owner for any perceived loss of value."

Jackson said the proposal would use a "carrot and stick" approach to preserving character homes.

“The stick is we can say no,” he said. “The carrot is we are going to be able to (offer) bonus density (in) the retention scheme in such a way that it’s going to be more financially advantageous for them to save the house than tear it down.”

The bonuses will vary depending on the site.

“We divided First Shaughnessy into small, medium and large size lots,” said Jackson.

“With the small lots you get increased density. With the medium sized lots you get increased density and the ability to build coach houses, which you currently don’t have.

“And (on) the large lots, which is around 40 per cent of the lots in First Shaughnessy, you can develop a coach house, or you can divide the house into stratified units.”

This is similar to the approach taken in the Rockland area in Victoria, which has preserved most of its heritage buildings.

“It’s the first time we’ve had a Heritage Conservation District in the city of Vancouver, but it is a tool that has been used by other cities,” said Jackson.

“There are a total of 70 Heritage Conservation Districts throughout British Columbia.”

If the report is passed by council, the proposals will go to public meetings in July.

First Shaughnessy was developed as an elite residential district by the Canadian Pacific Railway, beginning in 1907. It stretches from 16th Avenue to King Edward, and from Oak to East Boulevard.

It contains many of Vancouver’s largest and most beautiful mansions, but many have come down during the current property boom. According to figures from the city, demolition permits were issued for 202 buildings in Shaughnessy between 2005 and 2014.

Jackson said other areas may also become Heritage Conservation Districts, but Shaughnessy was rolled out first because of the high number of demolitions.

“We chose them first because there was a significant percentage of houses in First Shaughnessy that the owners wanted to demolish,” he said.

“It was one of the areas that, in terms of pure percentages, was the most in jeopardy. We also have a number of areas of the city — particularly Kitsilano, Dunbar, and Grandview-Woodland — which are also in jeopardy because of the high percentage of pre-1940s houses.”

Alarmed at the number of demolitions of character homes in Vancouver, council adopted its Heritage Action Plan in 2014. Consultant Don Luxton has been working with city staff on the plan, which will include an update of the city’s list of heritage buildings and strategies for saving old buildings in different neighbourhoods.

Heritage building supporter Caroline Adderson has drawn attention to the loss of character homes with her Facebook page Vancouver Vanishes, which documents houses that have been torn down.

She was encouraged to hear about the plan for a Heritage Conservation District.

“That’s wonderful,” she said. “They had to do something. What city lets its heritage mansion district be bulldozed? It’s just a disgrace. This is fabulous.”

Heritage expert John Atkin cautions that some Shaughnessy residents may not like the recommendations. A few years ago, the city proposed a density transfer and infill program to save old mansions, but “the neighbourhood went ape and killed it.”

Atkin said the idea of a Heritage Conservation District was floated back in 1986, but never acted on. He hopes this time it will stick, and save what remains of Vancouver’s toniest neighbourhood.

“There are enough original homes in Shaughnessy that still give a sense of the character of the area,” he said. “It gives us a good chance of leaving a legacy way down the road.”

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The Rosemary Mansion on Selkirk Avenue in Vancouver.

Photograph by: Ric Ernst, Vancouver Sun

