

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

September 24, 2015 **EOC Room #1**

Please meet at the top of the foyer stairs near the water fountain and we will all go through the secure door together.

AGENDA

1.0 Working Group Meeting Notes of August 27, 2015

2.0 Communication Strategy and Next Public Consultation (Nov. 21, 2015)

3.0 Update on Draft Final Report Content

4.0 Next Meeting

Thursday, October 22, 2015 (Tentative)
6:00pm

*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 August 27, 2015

PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy, Chair
Maureen Arvanitidis (NWHPS)
Tom Bellamy
David Brett (QPRA), Vice-Chair
Deane Gurney (QPRA)
Steve North (NWHPS)
Dave Vallee
Jennifer Wolowic

CITY STAFF:

Julie Schueck, Heritage Planner

REGRETS

Rebecca Bateman
Bruce Cheng
Gary Holisko
Robert Toth

1.0 Working Group Meeting Notes of July 23, 2015:

- Robert Toth's name was added to the list of those present. There were no other corrections, additions or deletions.

2.0 Review of Implementation Strategies and Principles:

- The revised implementation strategies and principles were reviewed and the following suggestions made:

Principles:

Principle C was revised to read (words in italics represent revision):

“New construction *or renovations* that replace *or alter* existing buildings, or that cause change to the existing landscape, should be conditional on its compatibility with the heritage character of the neighbourhood.”

Strategies:

Strategy #1 “Identify and define the heritage character of the neighbourhood” has been reordered to the following:

Recommendations:	Next Steps:
a. Develop an informal inventory of neighbourhood buildings and landscape features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Engage university planning students to conduct a neighbourhood building and landscape features photographic survey and to identify year of construction and style for each building/landscape feature. ii. Publish final version on the City’s website and invite the public and heritage groups to view it.
b. Create a brief summary statement of the Queen’s Park Heritage context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Incorporate information from the neighbourhood heritage definition. ii. Summarize the key messages from the revised Queen’s Park Heritage Context Statement.
c. Create a summary statement defining the heritage of the neighbourhood.	iii. Incorporate suggestions from residents and other stakeholders obtained through the survey, open houses and other public engagement activities.
d. Update the Queen’s Park Heritage Context Statement every five years.	i. Include an update schedule in Heritage Planner’s long range work plan.

Strategy #2 “Provide a variety of financial and non-financial incentives to encourage the retention and restoration/renovation of existing buildings and landscape elements that contribute to the heritage character of the neighbourhood” has been revised mostly in terms of the order of recommendations. Revisions are shown with red italics:

Recommendations:	Next Steps:
<p>Revise the existing Queen’s Park Design Guidelines and use them as an incentive for the retention of buildings older than 50 years.</p>	<p>i. Develop a non-financial incentive program that is tied to updated residential design guidelines. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If a house that is older than 50 years is retained, it may achieve a floor space ratio of 0.60. - If a house that is older than 50 years is demolished and the new house meets the revised design guidelines, it may achieve a floor space ratio of 0.50. - If a house older than 50 years is demolished and the new house does not meet the revised design guidelines, then the house may only achieve a floor space ratio of 0.40. <p>Give consideration to the requirement that all renovations and new-builds must meet the revised design guidelines.</p>
<p>Provide the opportunity for properties with a building older than 50 years to apply for increased densification through infill housing, stratification, or subdivision.</p>	<p>i. Collect and map data on properties regarding lot size, house size and construction date.</p> <p>ii. Develop criteria for infill housing, stratification, or subdivision based on the data results and in conjunction with the current review of the Official Community Plan.</p> <p>iii. Investigate using a 2-tier system, where some proposals apply for infill through Heritage Revitalization Agreements and some through agreeing to Heritage Designation.</p>
<p>Consider mechanisms for reviewing the designs (renovations and new) of single</p>	<p>i. Investigate if the Community Heritage Commission mandate can be</p>

family dwellings.	<p>changed to include a design review component.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Investigate if a Development Permit Area would allow for the creation of a design review body for single family dwellings. iii. Identify other options.
Make applying for renovations easier, quicker and <i>less expensive</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Reassess triggers for automatic servicing upgrades. ii. Reconsider the requirement that a full set of architectural plans be provided for small renovations.
Develop a system of fee rebates for work that retains existing buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. If the minimum requirements of the revised design guidelines are met, applicants may apply for a 50% rebate on building and engineering fees. ii. If a registered architect is retained for the duration of a Heritage Revitalization Agreement proposal, the applicant may apply for a 50% rebate on the rezoning fee. Work must be completed before a rebate can be requested.
Lobby for official codes to acknowledge and respect heritage buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Continue to lobby the provincial and federal governments to provide relaxations in official codes for buildings identified as heritage (with the definition of 'heritage' being as broad as possible).
Support the BC Building Code Alternate Compliance Section.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Continue to promote the BC Building Code Alternate Compliance Section for applications involving recognized heritage buildings.
Continue to utilize available heritage conservation tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Promote the use of Heritage Revitalization Agreements and Heritage Designations. ii. Consider using other existing tools (such as heritage inspections) from Part 27 of the Local Government Act. iii. Identify and assess how other local governments promote and utilize heritage conservation tools.
Develop incentives for existing multi-family buildings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify and collect data on existing multi-family buildings. ii. Consider <i>simple ways for allowing</i>

	<p><i>these buildings to be rebuilt with the same number of units</i> in the event the buildings are destroyed. (The City could consider carrying out rezoning of these properties in consultation with the affected property owners.)</p> <p>iii. Consult with affected property owners.</p>
<p>Support the New Westminster Heritage Foundation.</p>	<p>i. Consider increasing and regularizing the City's existing annual financial contribution.</p> <p>ii. Identify and assess how other local governments provide financial incentives to identified heritage buildings.</p>

Strategy #3 “Develop mechanisms, including regulations that prevent, or policies that deter the demolition of existing buildings and landscape elements that contribute to the heritage character of the neighbourhood” has been revised to the following. Revisions are shown with red italics:

Recommendations:	Next Steps:
<p>a. Establish, for the entire neighbourhood, a Heritage Conservation Area, a Development Permit Area, or a new zone <i>with a lower allowable floor space ratio.</i></p>	<p>i. Assess and compare the benefits and obstacles of each approach. ii. Assess and compare the legal obligations of each approach (ie: can demolitions be prevented in a Development Permit Area?).</p>
<p>b. Identify the reasons why demolitions occur.</p>	<p>i. Conduct an economic analysis of key drivers for demolition. ii. Compare results with data developed in other strategies to identify which properties are most likely to seek demolition. iii. Determine if there are mechanisms available that would directly influence and deter demolitions.</p>
<p>c. Establish mechanisms <i>to deter</i> demolitions.</p>	<p>i. Develop a policy that requires a high percentage of deconstruction. (<i>City already has this underway</i>). ii. Develop a policy that requires a higher level of recycling than currently identified in the MetroVancouver recycling program (ie: banisters, trim, frames, etc.) iii. Refer both policies to the City’s Environment Committee.</p>
<p>d. Protect trees on both public and private property.</p>	<p>i. Develop an Urban Forest Management Plan and Bylaw (<i>City already has this underway</i>).</p>

Strategy #4 “Encourage support for heritage conservation by providing easy-to-access information and enhanced communication for residents and other interested parties” been revised to the following. Revisions are shown with red italics:

Recommendations:	Next Steps:
a. Promote the heritage brand of the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Include a concise statement about the value of the City’s history and heritage in formal communication material. ii. Include heritage conservation in the City’s strategic planning goals. iii. Include the consideration of heritage value in land use management decisions.
b. Provide innovative learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Expand the City’s practice of providing workshops by targeting specific groups such as the building industry and the real estate industry. ii. Organize large events with world-class speakers and local experts on heritage conservation.
c. Develop informational material that is easy to access and follow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop a ‘renovation road map’ and other material that provides information on making renovations easier, quicker and <i>less expensive</i>. ii. Develop a brochure about heritage conservation for real estate agents to provide at their open houses. iii. Make information on the City’s heritage conservation program more prominent on the website, with links to other resources and access to above hand-outs. iv. Identify and address common myths about heritage programs and tools. v. Post the neighbourhood inventory on the City’s website. vi. Determine methods for reaching potential buyers before they purchase a property with an historic building on it and outline retention options <i>and benefits</i>.
d. <i>Develop a communication strategy for the implementation of recommendations a – c in Strategy #4.</i>	i. <i>Work with the Communications Division to develop the communication strategy and timing.</i>

3.0 Content of Final Report

No suggestions were received.

4.0 Next Public Consultation

The draft principles and strategies will be on the agenda of the October 2015 meeting of the Queen's Park Residents' Association meeting.

Suggestions for the next public consultation (to be scheduled in Fall 2105):

- Hold on a Saturday.
- Venue – Centennial Lodge.
- Provide refreshments.
- Invite a guest speaker (Don Luxton or Caroline Adderson)
- Create three key messages for the newsletter/invitation; for example:
 - “Vancouver’s First Shaughnessy neighbourhood had x demos in x years.”
 - “After a one year study, their neighbourhood might be protected with as Heritage Conservation Area.”
 - “Come to this meeting and find out if Queen’s Park should be protected as a Heritage Conservation Area too.”
- Identify a neighbourhood iconic house, take its photo, put it in the newsletter and ask: “How would you feel if this house were demolished?”
- “New West No More”
- Before the next public consultation, have an interview with the local paper, outline the principles and strategies, invite people to attend the event, and say that we are hoping to expand the ideas to the rest of the city.

It was suggested that we need a communications strategy, both as a recommendation for the fourth strategy and for getting people to come out and participate in the next consultation event. Councillor McEvoy suggested that someone from the City’s Communications Department attend the next meeting and brainstorm with the group.

5.0 Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 24, 2015 6:00pm in EOC Room #1 (the same room as the August meeting)

September 14, 2015

Hon. Gregor Robertson, Mayor
3rd Floor, City Hall
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor Robertson,

The Historic Districts Council is a not-for-profit, private organization which serves as the citywide advocate for New York's historic neighborhoods. HDC is the only organization in New York City which works directly with community-based groups to help protect, preserve and enhance the physical character of our city's historic neighborhoods through programs of community education, outreach and advocacy. Since our founding in 1970, HDC has worked closely with New York City's municipal preservation agency, the Landmarks Preservation Commission, serving as partners, advocates and, when necessary, their conscience and ombudsman.

New York City has one of the United States' oldest and strongest preservation ordinances. Celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year, the New York City Landmarks Law empowers the City to designate and regulate individual buildings, parks and neighborhoods. The Landmarks Preservation Commission oversees over 31,000 buildings in New York City, regulating all proposed exterior changes to designated buildings. This inventory of buildings is under 4% of the total built property of New York City but includes some of the city's most well-known buildings and most desirable neighborhoods. The Empire State Building, the Metropolitan Museum, Brooklyn Heights, Greenwich Village, the Upper West Side, SoHo and Tribeca are all regulated by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, acting under the Landmarks Law.

Real estate development is one of New York City's principal economic engines. The amount of money involved in real estate is genuinely awe-inspiring; several hundreds of billions of dollars is made and traded annually. As such, there is a very powerful real estate lobby the Real Estate Board of New York, which seeks to deregulate real estate for the economic benefit of owners and developers. RENBY, one of the strongest lobbying groups in New York State, has campaigned against preservation and conservation regulations since they've first been proposed in the 1950's. They are the player on the other side of preservation, always ready to insert themselves in local issues and try to influence public opinion and sway decision-makers to their vision of a pure real estate market. However, one thing they have never done is try to demonstrably prove that landmark regulations depress property values or economically impact property owners negatively. That is because preservation is undeniably good for neighborhood property values, and even free-market capitalists know it.

Areas which are overseen by preservation agencies create certainty and stability for property owners. Owners who own landmark properties know what the future will bring, which protects them from the vicissitudes of real estate speculation. From the perspective of the homeowner, being in an area where houses are protected against speculative demolition means an assurance that the area will not transform and unravel around your property into an unrecognizable morass of placelessness. For the developer, it means that empty property is harder to come by and actually more valuable – a worthwhile trade-off for aesthetic oversight. For the community, it is a means of empowerment, a way to have a voice about the future of their neighborhood and a way to ensure that their personal investments in their homes will be treasured and continued by future generations.

Vancouver is not New York City and there are different market forces at play. But both places are vibrant, vital cities which pride themselves on growth and change. Historic districts work for cities – they are important, potent tools for guiding the growth of cities in a sustainable, community-based way which respects and protects the shared past while encouraging a grounded future.

Please support the First Shaughnessy Heritage Conservation Area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Simeon Bankoff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S".

Simeon Bankoff
Executive Director

cc: Heritage Vancouver Society