

REPORT

Land Use and Planning Committee

To: Mayor Coté and Members of Council **Date:** 11/16/2015

From: Land Use and Planning Committee **File:** 13.2510.12

Report #: 443/2015

Subject: **Queen's Park Neighbourhood Heritage Study: Draft Principles and Implementation Strategies**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Queen's Park Neighbourhood Heritage Study Working Group is nearing completion of the study and is ready to share their final draft principles and strategies for retaining and enhancing the character of the Queen's Park neighbourhood through a combination of incentives and regulations.

1. COMMENTS & ANALYSIS

At its meeting held October 5, 2015, the Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC) considered the attached staff report and supported the recommendation in the report.

Staff made a brief presentation outlining the process to date, summarizing the draft principles and strategies, and identifying the objectives regarding the upcoming public consultation event, scheduled for November 21, 2015.

The LUPC made favourable comments about the ongoing work of the Working Group.

2. OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council consideration:

1. That Council direct staff to proceed with the public consultation on the draft principles, strategies and actions as outlined in the attached report.
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

The Land Use and Planning Committee recommends Option 1.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 1: Report to LUPC dated October 5, 2015

Submitted on Behalf of the Land Use
and Planning Committee

Approved for Presentation to Council

Original Signed by:



Bev Grievs
Director of Development Services

Lisa Spitale
Chief Administrative Officer



Appendix 1

Report to LUPC dated October 5, 2015

REPORT

Development Services

To: Land Use and Planning Committee **Date:** 10/5/2015

From: Beverly Grieve **File:** 13.2510.12
Director of Development Services **Report #:** 411/2015

Subject: Queen's Park Neighbourhood Heritage Study - Draft Principles and Implementation Strategies

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Land Use and Planning Committee recommends that Council direct staff to proceed with the public consultation on the draft principles, strategies and actions as outlined in this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Queen's Park Neighbourhood Heritage Study Working Group is nearing completion of the study and is ready to share their final draft principles and strategies for retaining and enhancing the character of the Queen's Park neighbourhood through a combination of incentives and regulations.

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Heritage Study is to examine different approaches for retaining and enhancing the character of the Queen's Park neighbourhood through a combination of incentives and regulations.

See Appendix A for map of the study area.

2.0 POLICY

The Official Community Plan (1998) has ten heritage conservation goals for the City, of which the most relevant for this study are summarized as follows:

- Preserve or enhance historic assets in both residential and commercial areas;

- Promote the conservation and enhancement of buildings and sites which have historic or cultural significance to the community; and
- Protect the existing scale and character of heritage buildings and sites.

3.0 BACKGROUND

On November 4, 2013, Council endorsed the work program for the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Heritage Study regarding exploring options to support heritage conservation in the Queen's Park neighbourhood. On January 13, 2014, Council endorsed the Purpose, Terms of Reference, and Membership of the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Heritage Study (QPNHS) Working Group and on May 12, 2014, appointed 13 people to the Working Group, including the Chair of the Community Heritage Commission. Early in the process, one community member had to leave the group, resulting in a total membership of 12 people.

The Working Group has been meeting monthly, advancing through the work program and is now ready to go back out to the community with a final draft set of principles and strategies for comments.

4.0 PROCESS

The process for the QPNHS has included five stages:

- 1) Background work/understand the existing situation and context (*complete*);
- 2) Identify/research heritage conservation issues (*complete*);
- 3) Identify and analyze innovations and solutions (*complete*);
- 4) Identify implementation strategies (*complete*); and
- 5) Provide Council with a document of implementation strategies.

4.1 Public Consultation to Date

The Working Group has conducted the following public consultation in order to engage the neighbourhood and to elicit feedback.

Open Houses

There have been three public open houses to date (March and October 2014, and May 2015); two were held at City Hall and one at the Anvil Centre. Presentation boards were available for review with the opportunity to write out suggestions and questions and attach these to each board. Every question was answered and published in subsequent open houses and newsletters.

Neighbourhood Survey

To inform the identification of issues, the Working Group and staff developed a heritage survey, based on specific themes. A paper copy was mailed to all Queen's Park neighbourhood residents (approximately 1250 owners and renters), with an option to

mail/drop-off a copy or to respond to the survey on-line. It was also made available through the websites and social media sites of the Queen's Park Residents' Association, the New Westminster Heritage Preservation Society, City Page and the City's website and social media sites. The response rate was nearly 10% (120 people). Information received from the survey has informed subsequent work.

Newsletters

The Working Group and staff developed a series of newsletters that have been mailed to all Queen's Park neighbourhood residents (approximately 1250 owners and renters), with the purpose of informing people of the progress of the Working Group, to invite them to participate, and to seek comments.

Speaker Series

As part of identifying solutions and innovations, the City and Working Group hosted a public speaker series during the first three months of 2015. The first presentation was the Senior Heritage Planner from the City of Vancouver who spoke on their Heritage Action Plan; the second presentation was heritage consultant Donald Luxton who made a presentation on the heritage conservation initiatives in the First Shaughnessy neighbourhood of Vancouver; and the third presentation was a combination of the BC Assessment Authority and Westland Insurance Group Ltd.

Website

Since the beginning of the Queen's Park Neighbourhood Heritage Study, there has been a dedicated webpage on the City's website where it is possible to find staff reports, open house material, newsletters, and Working Group agenda packages. All publication material related to the study has included this web link: www.newwestcity.ca/qpnhs

FaceBook Page

The Working Group developed a FaceBook page for the study which has been updated with posts regularly.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The work for each stage of the study has been a collaboration between staff and the Working Group, and has been informed by meetings, research, expert speakers, public engagement, and input from Council.

Based on community input and research, the following themes were identified:

- 1) Neighbourhood Character;
- 2) Design Guidelines;
- 3) Incentives and Regulations;
- 4) Densification, Affordability and Diversity of Housing Types; and
- 5) Buy-in for Neighbourhood Heritage Conservation Strategies

These themes informed the development of the following draft principles, strategies and actions that the Working Group would now like to take out to the community for comment.

Principles:

- A. The heritage character of the Queen's Park neighbourhood is highly valued by the neighbourhood, the City and the region.
- B. Most of the existing buildings and landscape features contribute to the heritage character of the neighbourhood and should be retained insofar as it is practical to do so.
- C. New construction or renovations that replace or alter existing buildings or causes change to the existing landscape should be conditional on its compatibility with the heritage character of the neighbourhood.

The following are the strategy recommendations and actions being proposed by the Working Group. The purpose of each of the four strategies is also explained.

Strategy #1: Identify and define the heritage character of the neighbourhood.

Purpose: The heritage character of the neighbourhood includes cultural, social, natural, landscaped and built elements that have been identified by the neighbourhood. It is important to identify the features of the neighbourhood that contribute to its overall character in order to know what existing places and features are important to retain.

Actions:	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.	i. 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.

Purpose: Most of the existing buildings (houses, apartment buildings, etc.) and landscape features (mature trees, open space around a house, etc.) all contribute to the heritage character of the neighbourhood. Providing incentives, such as the opportunity to apply for a Heritage Revitalization Agreement, is a positive way to reinforce the heritage value of those places and encourage their retention and renovation/restoration rather than their replacement.

Actions:	Next Steps:
<p>a. 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>b. 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>c. Consider mechanisms for reviewing the designs (renovations and new) of single family dwellings.</p>	<p>i. Investigate if the Community Heritage Commission mandate can be changed to include a design review component.</p> <p>ii. Investigate if a Development Permit Area would allow for the creation of a design review body for single family dwellings.</p> <p>iii. Identify other options.</p>
<p>d. Make applying for renovations easier, quicker and less expensive.</p>	<p>i. Reassess triggers for automatic servicing upgrades.</p> <p>ii. Reconsider the requirement that a full set of architectural plans be provided for small renovations.</p>
<p>e. Develop a system of fee rebates for work that retains existing buildings</p>	<p>i. If the minimum requirements of the revised design guidelines are met, applicants may apply for a 50% rebate on building and engineering fees.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>f. Lobby for official codes to acknowledge and respect heritage buildings.</p>	<p>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).</p>
<p>g. Support the BC Building Code Alternate Compliance Section.</p>	<p>i. Continue to promote the BC Building Code Alternate Compliance Section for applications involving recognized heritage buildings.</p>

<p>h. Continue to utilize available heritage conservation tools.</p>	<p>i. Promote the use of Heritage Revitalization Agreements and Heritage Designations.</p> <p>ii. Consider using other existing tools (such as heritage inspections) from Part 27 of the Local Government Act.</p> <p>iii. Identify and assess how other local governments promote and utilize heritage conservation tools.</p>
<p>i. Develop incentives for existing multi-family buildings.</p>	<p>i. Identify and collect data on existing multi-family buildings.</p> <p>ii. Consider simple ways for allowing these buildings to be rebuilt with the same number of units 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>j. 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:

Purpose: In the event that incentives are not enough to retain an existing building or landscape feature, it is appropriate to have regulations in order to protect places and features of heritage value.

<p>Actions:</p>	<p>Next Steps:</p>
<p>a. Establish, for the entire neighbourhood, a Heritage Conservation Area, a Development Permit Area, or a new zone with the primary goal of heritage conservation.</p>	<p>i. Assess and compare the benefits and obstacles of each approach.</p> <p>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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>c. Establish mechanisms to deter demolitions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>d. Protect trees on both public and private property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop an Urban Forest Management Plan and Bylaw (<i>City already has this underway</i>).

Strategy #4: Encourage support for heritage conservation by providing easy-to-access information and enhanced communication for residents and other interested parties.

Purpose: Municipal heritage conservation programs benefit from being fair and reasonable, and from having the support of a City Council, the community, and specific groups within the community that are involved with those programs (builders, real estate agents, architects, etc.). Heritage conservation programs can seem complicated, and often, the legal obligations for protected heritage property might seem onerous. Building support for heritage conservation programs can be assisted by the sharing of useful, easy-to-access information that alleviates concerns and generates enthusiasm for heritage conservation.

<p>Actions:</p>	<p>Next Steps:</p>
<p>a. Promote the heritage brand of the City.</p>	<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 less expensive. 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 and benefits.
d. Develop a communication strategy for the implementation of recommendations a–c in Strategy #4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Work with the Communications Division to develop the communication strategy and timing.

6.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

With Council's direction, the next public consultation event would take place at Centennial Lodge in the early afternoon of Saturday November 21, 2015. The Working Group would like to make this last scheduled public event as meaningful as possible for the neighbourhood. With advice from the City's Communications Department, the Working Group would like to provide a more festive atmosphere by hosting a barbeque or something similar and to have a speaker. The intent would be to encourage people from the neighbourhood and those who are already in the park for other activities to stop by, have some food, and listen to a presentation and/or browse the information boards.

A newsletter with the draft principles, strategies and actions would be mailed to all Queen's Park neighbourhood residents (owners and renters) inviting them to the above public consultation and to provide them with alternative ways that they can provide comments.

Other audiences for review of the draft principles, strategies and actions would include the Queen's Park and other Residents' Associations, the New Westminster Heritage Preservation Society, and relevant City committees.

The final output would be a document presented to Council which would contain the final heritage conservation principles, strategies and actions for retaining and enhancing the character of the Queen's Park neighbourhood, as well as background material and a summary of the Working Group process.

7.0 OPTIONS

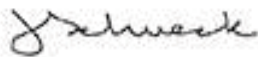
The Land Use Planning Committee has the following options to consider:

- 1) That the Land Use and Planning Committee recommends that Council direct staff to proceed with the public consultation on the draft principles, strategies and actions as outlined in this report.
- 2) That the Land Use and Planning Committee recommends an alternative direction.

Staff recommends Option 1.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A: Study Area Map



Julie Schueck,
Heritage Planner

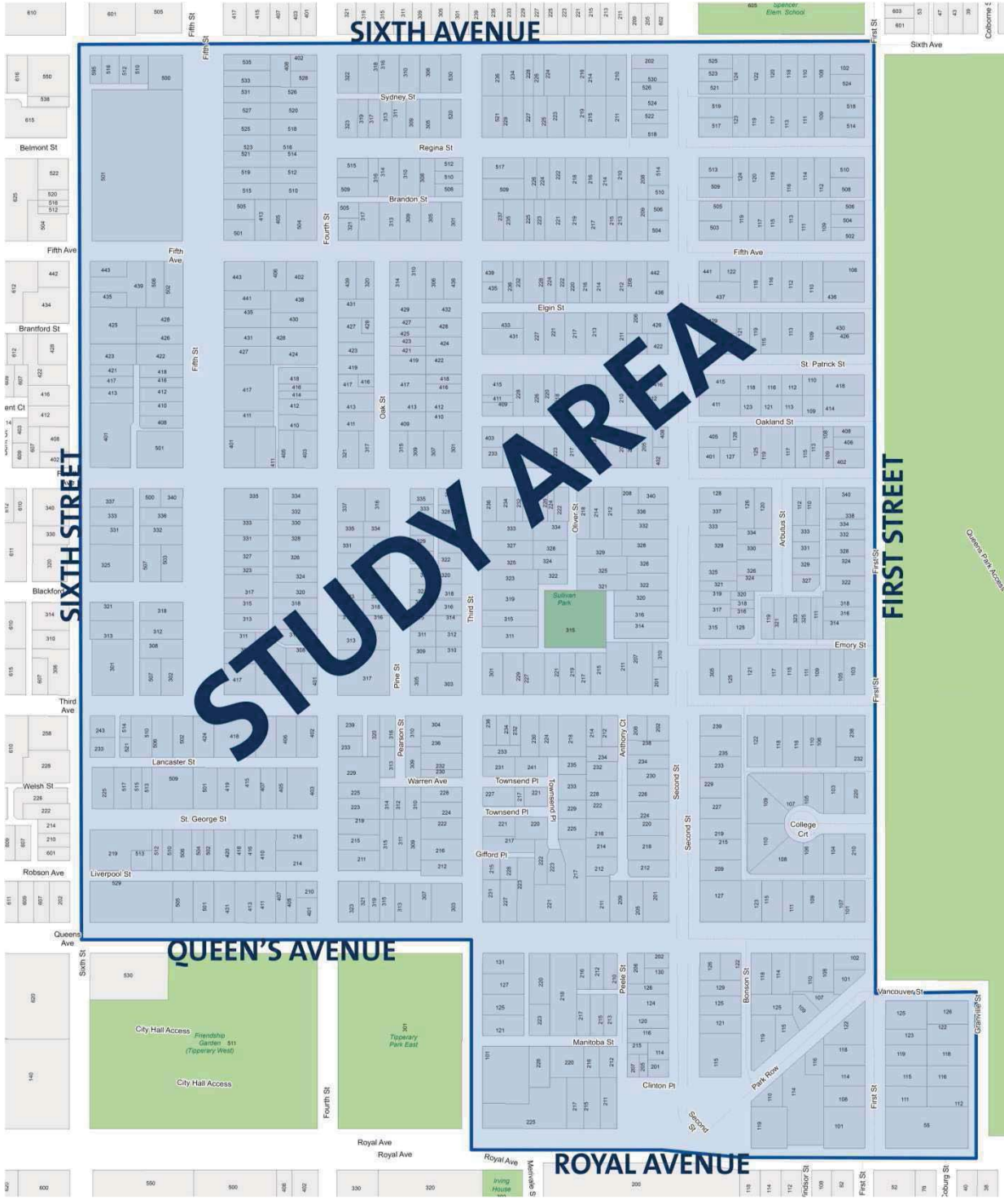


For
Jackie Teed,
Manager of Planning



Beverly Grieve
Director of Development Services

Appendix A
Study Area Map



STUDY AREA

SIXTH AVENUE

QUEEN'S AVENUE

ROYAL AVENUE

FIRST STREET

SIXTH STREET

Belmont St

Brantford St

Blackford St

Third Ave

Robson Ave

Queens Ave

Sixth St

600

Fifth Ave

Fifth St

Blackford St

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Liverpool St

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