

# **REPORT**

## ***Climate Action, Planning and Development***

**To:** Community Heritage Commission      **Date:** February 1, 2023

**From:** Judith Mosley, Senior Heritage Planner      **File:** MAS00597

**Item #:** [Report Number]

**Subject:** Heritage Review (Demolition): 437 Elmer Street

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### **PURPOSE**

To review the heritage value of the building and provide a recommendation on demolition.

### **SUMMARY**

According to City of New Westminster records, the Vernacular-style house at 437 Elmer Street in the Sapperton neighbourhood was built in 1912. The building is not legally protected by bylaw, and has not been listed on the City's Heritage Register or Heritage Inventory. As a result of the building's age (111 years old), the Community Heritage Commission is being asked to review the heritage value of the house in advance of a Demolition Permit process.

### **GUIDING POLICY AND REGULATIONS**

#### **100 Years and Older Heritage Review Policy**

In 2020, Council approved a revised heritage review policy, which highlights the City's interest in retaining New Westminster's oldest buildings. As such, redevelopment applications for buildings that are 100 years and older require a Heritage Values Assessment and review by the Community Heritage Commission.

#### **Demolition Permits**

Demolition Permits are issued by the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development, though the Director may forward the application to Council for further consideration, or consideration of a temporary protection order where warranted.

## **Temporary Protection Order**

A temporary protection order may be issued by Council for a property that is or may be considered to have heritage value sufficient to justify its conservation. Without consent of the owner, a temporary protection order may only last 60 days, after which the demolition permit must be issued.

## **Heritage Designation**

A Heritage Designation Bylaw is a form of land use regulation that places long-term protection on the land title of a property and which is the primary form of regulation that can prohibit demolition. Heritage Designation does not require owner consent. However, without consent of the owner, the owner is entitled under Provincial law to claim compensation for loss of zoning entitlement value from the Designation.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Property Description**

City records indicate that 437 Elmer Street was built in 1912 with later additions and modifications. The one-and-one-half storey, vernacular, square-shaped building with clipped gables is approximately 160 sq. m. (1,724 sq. ft.). It faces south east on Elmer Street. The property has a density of about 0.248 floor space ratio (FSR), which is approximately 50% of the square footage available to the property in the Zoning Bylaw.

The heritage assessment provided for the property indicates that the original 1912 house was moved and substantially altered or was demolished and rebuilt around 1945. No demolition permit is on record with the City, however little evidence of the 1912 structure has been found on the site. The house has metal sliding windows and is clad in wood shingles at the basement level, stucco on the main floor, and wood siding in the gable ends.

Photographs of the building in its current condition are available in Attachment B.

### **Building Condition**

Based on current photographs and the heritage assessment (Attachment B), the house does not appear to have retained its original location on the site, form, materials or finishes. The current house is considered to date mostly or entirely to approximately 1945. It is considered to be in poor condition.

### **Development Policy Context**

The property is zoned Single Detached RS-1 which allows for a single detached house and secondary suite to a combined maximum of 0.5 FSR as well as a laneway house. The owners would be permitted approximately 160 sq. m. (1,753.5 sq. ft.) of additional

floor space above what is currently on site. Further Planning approvals would not be needed.

In the Official Community Plan (OCP), the property is designated as “Residential – Detached and Semi-Detached Housing” (M\_RD) which envisions single detached dwellings (which may include a secondary suite and/or a detached accessory dwelling unit), and duplexes. The surrounding properties fronting Elmer Street have a similar designation.

### **Site Context**

The subject site is located in the Sapperton neighbourhood, on the north side of Elmer Street. On this same block of Elmer Street are single-detached houses that were constructed in historic and contemporary styles, with the earliest ranging from 1908 (2), 1910 (1), and 1911 (1), to the most recent built in 2012 (1), 2014 (1) and 2016 (1). The other homes on the block were constructed in 1921 (1), 1926 (1), 1933 (1), 1939 (2), 1940 (1), 1946 (1), 1975 (1), 1979 (1), 1986 (1), 1987 (1), 1989 (1), 1990 (1) and 1993 (2).

A site context map is included as Attachment A.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Heritage Value**

A heritage assessment concludes that the property has low heritage value. The substantial changes made to the house around 1945 appear to have changed the footprint, massing, form, scale, design and finishing materials, leaving little evidence remaining of the original architectural character of the house. The little heritage value identified resides in its continued use as a single-family detached home, and representation of the replacement and renewal of some of the earlier cottages in the neighbourhood during the wartime period.

A heritage assessment with further details is available in Attachment B.

**FEEDBACK FROM THE COMMISSION**

The following options are available for consideration by the Community Heritage Commission:

- 1) That the Community Heritage Commission recommend the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development issue a Demolition Permit for the house at 437 Elmer Street and that the applicant consider deconstruction as an alternative to demolition waste;
- 2) That the Community Heritage Commission recommend the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development direct staff to further explore retention options (i.e. redevelopment or relocation) for the house at 437 Elmer Street; or
- 3) That the Community Heritage Commission recommend that Council consider a temporary protection order for 437 Elmer Street; or
- 4) That the Community Heritage Commission provide an alternative recommendation, based on their discussions.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Site Context Map

Attachment B: Heritage Assessment and Current Photographs

This report was prepared by:  
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