

REPORT

Climate Action, Planning and Development

To: Mayor Cote and Members of Council **Date:** January 31, 2022

From: Emilie K. Adin, MCIP **File:** 13.2606.03
Director, Climate Action, Planning and
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Item #: 2022-34

Subject: **Heritage Review Policy Update: Buildings on the Heritage Inventory**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council expand the “Buildings 100 Years Old or Older” Heritage Review Policy to include buildings listed on the Heritage Inventory.

PURPOSE

For Council to consider expanding the “Buildings 100 Years Old or Older” Heritage Review Policy to include buildings listed on the Heritage Inventory.

PROPOSAL

At their meeting on November 3, 2021, the Community Heritage Commission (CHC) passed the following motion:

THAT the Community Heritage Commission recommends Council expand the “Buildings 100 Years Old or Older” policy to include buildings listed on the Heritage Inventory.

The current policy, related to the retention of buildings 100 years and older, expects the following:

- a) when an application comes forward, a high level of evaluation is conducted (i.e., requires a heritage assessment, prepared by a certified heritage professional to be provided as part of development applications for those sites);

- b) heritage assessments for buildings are reviewed by City staff prior to a demolition permit application being accepted;
- c) demolition permit applications are reviewed by the Community Heritage Commission; and
- d) for any properties which form part of a rezoning application which include a building with heritage value, all efforts be made to retain and restore that building as part of the proposed development (through an HRA).

Today, this aged-based policy does not cover all the buildings listed on the Heritage Inventory, even though these newer buildings (196) have been identified as having heritage value. As such, the Community Heritage Commission recommended updating and expanding the current age-based heritage review program to apply to all Inventory listed buildings, regardless of age: for consistency and clarity. An extract of the CHC meeting minutes is included in Attachment 1 of this report.

BACKGROUND

Heritage Inventory

The Heritage Inventory (1986) is an informal listing of historic New Westminster properties and represented the City's first step to identify local heritage assets. Further description is in Attachment 2. There are 760 properties on the Inventory of which 564 are already included in the review policy due to their age. Of the remaining 196 Inventory properties, 107 are either protected (Queen's Park Heritage Conservation Area, Heritage Revitalization Agreement, Heritage Designation, Conservation Covenant) and/or listed on the Heritage Register and would not be affected by the proposal. The proposal would impact the remaining 89 properties by bringing them into line with the same practice. See Attachment 3 for a breakdown of the Inventory by policy and protection categories.

Authority for Heritage Review

The City is known for its supply of older buildings with heritage merit and has had a heritage review policy for thirty-five years. These policies acknowledge the importance of older buildings to their neighbourhoods, and seek to identify and retain them where possible.

The City's processes for the review, delay and/or denial of permits for properties with heritage value must be in compliance with the Building Bylaw and the tools available through the Local Government Act. A summary of relevant regulations is included in Attachment 2.

History of the Heritage Review Policy

1987: Council adopted a policy that all demolition and building permit applications for buildings listed on the City's **Heritage Register** be reviewed by the Community Heritage Commission (then Heritage Advisory Committee), and that this group could refer the applications to Council as warranted. This practice continues today.

1993: Council amended the policy to include a review of demolition permit applications for all **pre-1950 buildings**. However, the review of these previously non-identified buildings would be conducted by Planning Division staff, who would forward the application to the Community Heritage Commission (CHC) for review if they deemed it appropriate. The CHC could then refer the applications to Council, as with Heritage Register buildings.

2011: Pre-1900 buildings were identified as significantly few, important, and at risk. As such, the policy was changed so that demolition permit applications for **pre-1900 buildings** would always be reviewed by the Community Heritage Commission, similar to buildings on the Heritage Register. The policy was also updated to capture staff review of all buildings older than **50 years, as a rolling date**. In 2016, this policy was reconfirmed including that all efforts be made to retain and restore such buildings (through an HRA) if the development requires a rezoning.

2020: Council expanded the policy again to include all buildings **100 years and older, as a rolling date**, as opposed to the earlier cut-off of 1900. This change is similar to the 2011 policy update that installed automatic staff review of demolition permits for 50 year old buildings, as a rolling date, as opposed to the earlier cut-off of 1950.

DISCUSSION

The proposed change would increase the number of properties covered by the more expansive elements of the Heritage Review policy by about 89, city-wide.

Expanding the heritage review program in this way would:

1. provide earlier and more clear indication to current or potential owners of these properties;
2. demonstrate that all buildings listed on the Heritage Inventory are important to the City of New Westminster, regardless of their age; and
3. provide staff with the authority to request a heritage assessment be conducted on older buildings without seeking Council permissions each time.

Overall, the proposed policy change is more transparent for owners, more efficient for the City, and reflects existing practice of identifying buildings listed on the Heritage Inventory as historically important, regardless of their age. It also will make heritage policies and practices more consistent across the program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Requiring a heritage assessment be submitted for buildings listed on the Heritage Inventory will reduce the amount of staff time required to complete a Heritage Review, which also serves to reduce demolition permit review timelines.

OPTIONS

The following options are available for Council's consideration:

1. That Council expand the "Buildings 100 Years Old or Older" Heritage Review Policy to include buildings listed on the Heritage Inventory.
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Extract of November 3, 2021 Community Heritage Commission (CHC) Meeting Minutes

Attachment 2: Policy and Regulations Summary

Attachment 3: Statistical Analysis

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